FEBRUARY 1958

COMMENTARY

The United States and the Poorest Peoples — OSCAR GASS

Zionist Ideology and World Jewry — OSCAR HANDLIN

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An Outsider Visits the Roman Ghetto — STEPHEN P. DUNN

Roman Ghetto—A Poem — HAROLD NORSE

Celia in the Garden of Eden—A Story — SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

Cedars of Lebanon
Early Science and Jewish Belief — DAVID NIETO

The Study of Man
A Debate on Race — MELVIN RICHTER

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Gordon A. Craig — George Lichtheim — Gerald Reitlinger

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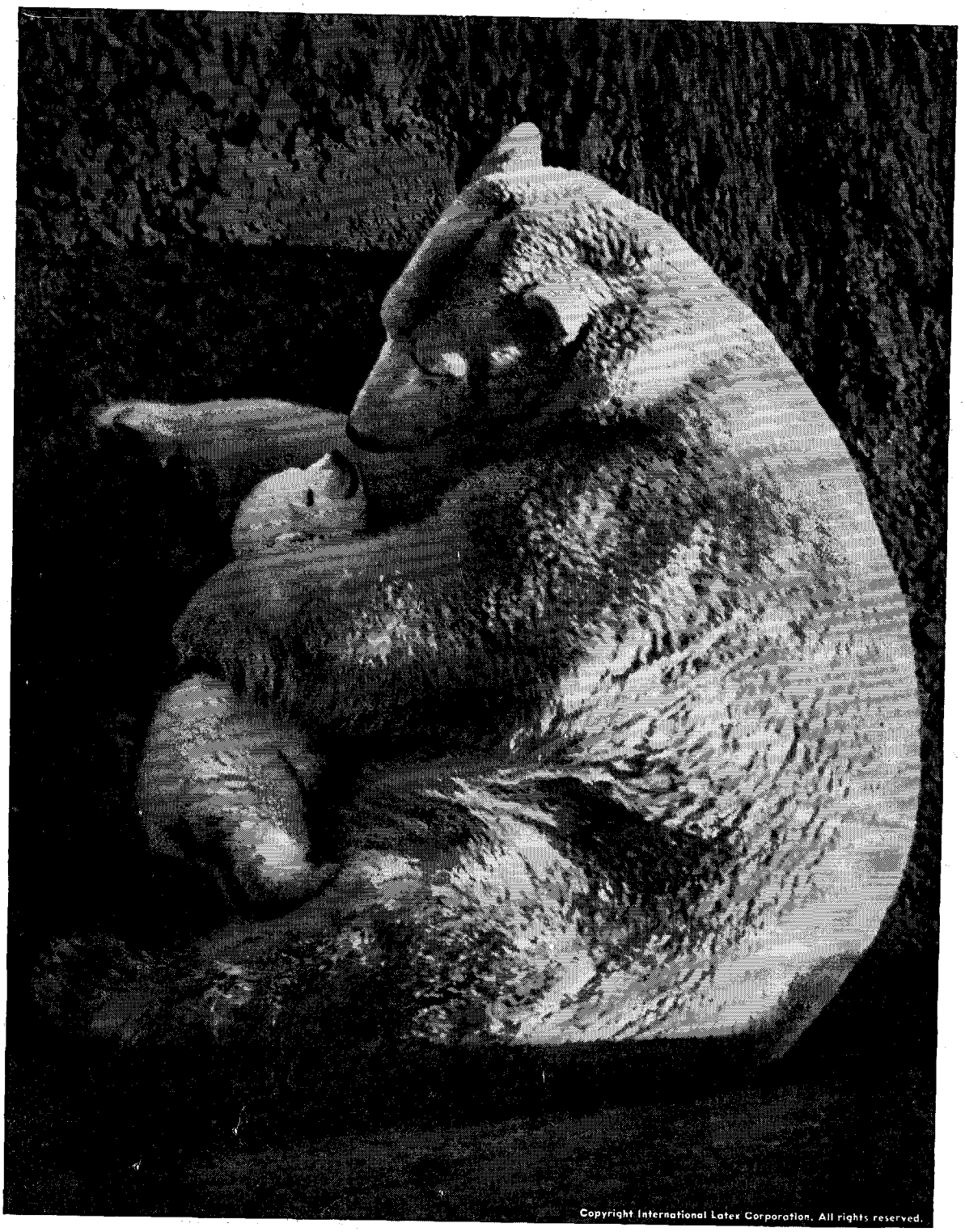

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What are the preoccupations and attitudes of Israel's intellectuals? A composite portrait by an American writer who now makes his home in Israel.

Can Europe Be United? *Max Beloff*

Six countries of continental Europe have recently taken an important step toward economic unification, while Britain is considering the advantages of an even wider free trade area embracing fourteen European countries. But political unity remains a distant goal for most Europeans. The problem is here considered by a noted British historian.

America and the Age of Sociology *Richard Chase*

An essay on Max Lerner's *America as a Civilization* by a literary critic who has lately been much preoccupied with the distinctive qualities of American culture. In the department "On the Horizon".

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The story of an old man's aloneness and of his vainly reaching out for life in a New York hospital. By a new writer.

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COMMENTARY

THE UNITED STATES AND THE POOREST PEOPLES

A Look Forward from Washington

OSCAR GASS

VIEWED candidly from Washington at the beginning of 1958, there is no prospect that the government of the United States will soon undertake general, systematic participation in the improvement of the economic condition of the poorest peoples. By the poorest peoples I mean those that have no experience of sustained, considerable rise in per capita income in the 20th century. I mean the peoples of continental Asia but not Japan, almost all of Latin America but not Venezuela, native Africa but not the foreign enclaves, and in Europe such peoples as those of Portugal, Spain, southern Italy, and Greece. Characteristically they have annual incomes below $150 per person, sometimes half that. For them there will be no Marshall Plan, national or regional, short-term or long-term, to be financed by grants or by loans.

I exclude the Communist bloc countries from present consideration. They include some of the poorest peoples. But our relations with the Communist countries involve additional issues. I abstain from these issues in the present article. Then it is possible to summarize the position quite categorically and without danger of misunderstanding. There is no willingness in Washington to take any comprehensive responsibility for economic development even in Latin America; there is no general program of assistance to India, no plan for the Middle East, no systematic approach to the backward areas of southern Europe. Africa is only a geographical expression. Special situations (such as Korea and Viet Nam) receive comprehensive treatment from the United States government; otherwise there is no intention to participate systematically in general plans for the underdeveloped countries. Participation in general plans for underdeveloped countries has been regarded by Washington as involving too much responsibility; it demands knowledge we do not have; it costs too much money; and in the end it has been rejected as likely to cause more trouble than it is worth.

I recall the language attributed to a powerful member of President Eisenhower's cabinet when he was given the background of the case for the Aswan dam: the rise in

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AID to backward countries, and the record of the present U. S. administration in this area, are now once more among the major topics of public debate. They are here considered by a consulting economist who has lived in Washington during most of the past twenty years. OSCAR GASS has rendered professional advisory services, in recent years, to the governments of Israel, Indonesia, and Burma, but no person associated with those governments has any relationship to the views expressed in the present article. Mr. Gass is a new contributor to COMMENTARY.

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Egyptian population, the need for more food, the dependence of food on irrigation water. "Yes, yes," he said impatiently, "but how did it come to be *our* problem?" The aspirations or needs of the underdeveloped countries—even if they be needs for food to prevent starvation—are not recognized in Washington to be *our* problem in any comprehensive or systematic sense. These things are too burdensome, messy, and involving. There is no end to them. We turn our faces away.

The United States government will, however, offer economic assistance all over the world, outside the Communist bloc, and sometimes within it, by grant and loan, spottily and episodically. Aid will be given according to a variety of criteria, determined —in loose concert—by several separate Washington agencies. There will be special concern for countries under Communist pressure, and preference for those that orient their foreign policy and military dispositions in ways congenial to our foreign policy. Latin America is regarded as safely within our sphere of political influence; therefore it will continue to receive least attention. Once Mr. Humphrey held a reserve veto over everything international that cost money; today the State Department does, while the importance of the Treasury has declined. Individual-aid dispositions may, however, have little or no general foreign policy meaning. If there are heavy stocks of farm surpluses, and if India is willing to take its aid in loans to buy such commodities, India can get hundreds of millions of dollars of aid annually. As long as the political wind blows reasonably fair, India will also be able to get occasional loans from the Export-Import Bank, from the Development Loan Fund, and from the International Bank. If any non-Communist underdeveloped country submits a modest, well-formulated project loan application, it may get a loan from the Export-Import Bank, and, if denied at the Export-Import Bank, it may still get the same loan from the Development Loan Fund of the State Department, or it may get equivalent financing from the International Cooperation Agency, or from the Department of Agriculture. Turkey or Spain or Argentina, or any other country, may be regarded as a poor client in one Washington agency and a desirable client in another.

Washington continues to do business in this fragmentary way—considering each case on its merits, it is called—until the United States and a beneficiary country have parted in mutual disappointment. General policy thinking is at a minimum and is limited to the very top of the political hierarchy. On the staff level, hard-headedness means to avoid general plans, objectives, and ideas. Except in special situations (such as Korea and Viet Nam), no underdeveloped country has any firm basis for counting on continuing participation by the United States, by grant or loan, in its economic development. Between the Washington authorities and the officials of the underdeveloped country there is no general meeting of minds, no continuing exchange of views and plans. Below the highest political level, the American staff side is often put in an embarrassingly vacuous role. As there is little general policy, there is not much that a subordinate officer can say; he has to get instructions from the top, and that may take a long time. He has to appear to be knowing, while knowing nothing. Everybody preserves the decorums, but there is rarely any real community of sympathies; the relationships are too unequal and discontinuous.

II

We deceive ourselves if we believe that the poorest peoples would be happy merely to achieve our recent rate of economic growth. Starting with less of everything, they wish to grow faster. American industrial production, per capita of our population, was less in 1957 than it was in 1943. Even if we disregard the wartime peaks, our production growth has been only moderate. Let us take 1947-49 as 100, as the Federal Reserve does. Then 1957 is at most 144. But meanwhile our population has also grown by 16.6 per cent. On a per capita basis, our industrial production grew only

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24 per cent in nine years, or at a compound rate of 2.4 per cent. It is nothing to vaunt ourselves about. At such a rate of growth, it would take centuries for some of the underdeveloped countries to reach the level of the poorest people in Western Europe. Starting from where they do, they need advice and assistance to grow faster.

The advice they get in Washington is often entirely pointless. Such an advisory session was the September 1957 annual meeting of the International Bank and Fund. All the great powers of the Western world were there, and almost all the underdeveloped countries outside the Communist bloc. The underdeveloped countries got their fill of homilies on financial restraint. The Americans spoke against inflation, the British spoke against inflation, the Germans spoke against inflation; the French, headed by Mendès-France, had the grace to be silent. World commodity prices were falling. The incomes of primary producers were shrinking. The recession had begun in the United States. The representatives of the underdeveloped countries knew that, while others might be rich, their own economic growth in the past decade had been bitterly meager. The Indian delegate spoke of the hope of his government of achieving a per capita income "in about twenty years from now" of $100 per year. He qualified this hope with the observation that all underdeveloped countries present were aware they could not "possibly hope to achieve even a modest increase in their standard of living without massive support from the West." The statement was received with silence. President Eisenhower announced, "Wise and courageous leaders in every land are sounding a call to their fellow citizens to join in the defense of their currencies." The President warned the underdeveloped countries not to try to do too much, and to look to private investment. The ministers of the rich spoke heavily, Sir Dennis Robertson lightly. Robertson sustained his role as a wit; he spoke of Peer Gynt and the Boyg, of the virtuous King and the Coiner; there was the laughter of trifling at a hospital bed.

The Turkish delegate dragged the patient into view. He said:

> . . . the various kinds of aid given to, and investments made in, the less developed countries have not been adequate for coping with the ever widening gap which exists between developed and less developed countries. The trends indicate to us that in the future this difference between the potentials for development will continue to increase.

There was no response. The Ecuadorian delegate pushed the matter a little further:

> . . . foreign private investment responds quickly only when one type of industry—let us say it clearly, mining industry—offers a good prospect for juicy earnings. Private capital has done little or nothing to increase the electric power supply, modernize port facilities, build roads, rehabilitate railroads, develop agriculture, etc. . . . Any Latin American hopes of developing with the help of private capital are ostensibly limited. . . .

It was left for the Indian spokesman to raise these declarations to a higher level of generality:

> Underdeveloped countries with democratic constitutions cannot avoid satisfying the immediate and insistent claims for social and economic improvement, even as they strive for raising the tempo of development. . . . The State has to take up the leadership and initiative in the direction of filling up the major gaps in the economic structure . . . the bulk of the effort for development must come from the developing countries themselves. . . . the problem of raising living standards under conditions of freedom is the common responsibility of all nations. . . . Herein lies the great problem and challenge of our time, and it is in meeting this challenge that a heavy responsibility rests on all of us assembled here.

The meeting in September of free world Treasuries and Central Banks did not confront the challenge. Washington generally does not. It turns away to easier things.

III

THE pattern of Washington's economic collaboration with the poorest countries reflects the limitations of both sides. Hardly one of three countries has, in the past decade, availed itself as fully of the eco-

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nomic assistance Washington was willing to give as would have been possible with careful economic planning and persistent negotiating effort. The countries poorest in capital are commonly bitterly poor, too, in workmanlike ideas, plans, and formulated projects: they need both an idea of what to do and the resources with which to do it. What they have is a great ache of aspiration and frustration. None has gone the way of Thoreau or Gandhi; all have accepted the objective of a greater supply of material goods and services for their peoples, but barely a handful find themselves making solid progress towards the objective. They have problems of education and health that require decades of revolutionary effort. They are starved for entrepreneurship, private and public. They are often lethargic about detailed, boring development work, though quick to expect its fruits. They desire aid but reject counsel, even when it is qualified and disinterested. They are understandably sensitive of rebuffs and smart under the lectures they are so often given. Even more frequently than the richer countries, they are attracted by showy projects and dominated by partisan objectives or corrupt interests.

The burden taken up by him who determines to aid the poorest countries is accordingly great and varied. He may be happy to get out of it with a whole skin. Our American society commonly demands of those accorded its favor an air of confident, decisive cheerfulness. (Mr. Aneurin Bevan recently indicated his kinship with the American spirit by demanding that those who deal with the international situation give him grounds for "buoyancy or optimism.") But in this matter both assurance and a light heart are out of place. The economic development of the poorest countries constitutes a challenge they may be quite unable to meet even with our assistance. A touch of somber and pervasive doubt necessarily affects anyone who has ever worked in the poorest countries and has some glimmering of the effort, time, and good fortune required to bring most of these countries to an economic level approaching, let us say, that of the poorest regions in Western Europe. So great an economic development may indeed never occur—or only after such a lapse of centuries as makes all current judgment meaningless.

Our American society has permanent, deep-seated limitations when it comes to aiding the development of another people unless, as in the case of Canada, we can simply join our society with theirs. We are primarily concerned about getting ahead personally—which means financially. We strongly prefer to live in our own country, and—except in time of war—no one has the power to send us where we do not wish to go. We do not mix easily with people of other colors. Americans will not go to underdeveloped countries, except for limited periods and high pay; when abroad, they form their own community. Nationalism is a powerful barrier; use of American technical assistance in planning and execution of economic development projects is accordingly a delicate matter. Adherence to political democracy is not today an effective daily bond between people of widely different cultures, nor is adherence to private enterprise, or to democratic socialism. These are not convictions that break down national, cultural, and racial barriers. With the best will in the world, a society like ours can effectively assist only countries with a national leadership which desires assistance and is prepared to bear the first responsibility for thinking, planning, and organization. An underdeveloped country has to give its best to the task of its own development; then we can be helpful in a supporting role, and more in resources than in personnel.

The quality of American personnel concerned in international economic affairs, in Washington and abroad, has declined drastically since the early days of the Marshall Plan. Point Four never led to a comparable mobilization of talent. Our government limps along generally without a professional senior civil service; the true marks of a profession are to be found, in American government, only in the military services. Nowhere is this lack more evident than in the

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foreign aid programs. The agencies administering non-military grants have been subjected to almost annual reorganizations and and have no stable core of policy officers. Without wishing to reflect on the small number of highly qualified persons still to be found in this work, it is necessary to say quite simply what everybody in Washington knows: most of the better qualified people have left "foreign aid" work. Perhaps only the United States Information Agency has suffered a corresponding negative selection. When called upon to supply experts for foreign aid, other Washington agencies regularly detail the people they would miss least. The government apparatus in Washington and abroad has accordingly never even begun to develop the conceptions, organizations, and personnel needed for so enormous a task as a comprehensive approach to the economic growth requirements of the poorest countries.

The American people give at best only passive support to such a task, and the political parties are correspondingly reluctant to provide it with continuing authority and means. United Nations bodies operate on an even more meager scale, though sometimes in a better moral atmosphere. Both deal with individual problems and give hardly more than a glance at the overshadowing totality. In the absence of sharp Communist competition, this patchy empiricism could continue for decades, now up now down, or it could dissolve, in one country after another, amid mutual frustration and recrimination. There is some reason to believe that, by the late 1960's, such dissolution will have taken place over significant areas of Asia and Africa. The Communist advance is being pushed harder, and the American retreat has strong supporters. What is now beginning to be called "disengagement" may acquire a new dimension.

IV

To the extent that the United States "disengages" itself from the poorest peoples, it will be following the course taken by Western Europe. Where the poorest countries are concerned, Western European society may now be said definitely to have made the great withdrawal. The seizure of Suez in 1956, and the expulsion of the Dutch from Indonesia in 1957, were climactic events on the way. We shall probably not see a reversal in the next decade, though some profits are ploughed back into Middle East oil, and African extractive industries even get new money. The old home of our common Western culture declares from time to time—after Suez as before the Marshall Plan—that, on balance, it is unable even to sustain itself. In 1957, having meanwhile negotiated $1,800,000,000 in new credits since Suez, the United Kingdom had to forego payment on its 1945 loan from the United States government: the event went almost unremarked on this side of the water.

Western Europe has failed since 1945 to attain more than a precarious satisfaction of the economic demands of its own people. This failure is the more striking since output has risen much faster than in the United States. Europe nevertheless preserved a net dependence on dollar aid and could not provide capital of its own for the risky venture of investment in the poorest countries—or where it could, as in Germany, there was more profit in investing at home. It is a fact of the first importance that the United States has no real Western European partner in the economic development of the poorest countries. What Communism may in the future be able to extract from its subjects without asking for their consent, the richer Western European peoples could not provide with democratic good will. I fear that it is vain to think democratic Europe will do much more in the 1960's than it has in the 1950's. The United States will probably have to go it substantially alone—or not go at all. This isolation makes the moral and political problem of relations with the underdeveloped peoples almost insoluble for a society like that of contemporary America.

In the twelve years from the end of World War II to June 30, 1957, Washington made available to the rest of the world

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some $60 billion of grants and loans (after deduction of repayments). (This does not include $3.5 billion contributed to the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank.) The recent annual rate of new United States grants and loans is still roughly $5 billion. Let us exclude from the above total $20 billion of military grants; they should not have been regarded as grants at all, but as contributions to a common pool of military effectiveness. There remain $40 billion of non-military grants and loans—$29 billion being grants. But these were devoted overwhelmingly to purposes regarded as far more important in national policy than the economic development of the poorest countries. No less than $6.8 billion went to the United Kingdom, $5.5 billion to France, $3.9 billion to Germany, $2.8 billion to Italy, and $2.6 billion to Japan. The above five countries plus five others—Korea, China (Formosa), Austria, Netherlands, and Greece—received about 70 per cent of our non-military grants and loans.

We have done our giving and lending primarily to the relatively rich. The whole remainder of the American hemisphere received from the United States only $1.2 billion in grants and loans during twelve years. During the same period seven underdeveloped countries *each* received a total of $500 million or more in non-military grants and loans: they were Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Formosa, Indo-China, Korea, and the Philippines. All were involved in war, rehabilitation from war, or threat of war. India received grants and loans totaling $366 million—about one dollar per head of its population. Underdeveloped countries were not our primary concern, and perhaps least of all the needy countries in our geographical back yard.

V

We have a way of referring underdeveloped countries to private enterprise. In our economy and in many others, private business, appropriately complemented by government, can be the principal enterprise form of a free, progressive society. But underdeveloped countries often fail to find the address of private enterprise at all. They accuse us of cynicism, as we accuse them of irresponsibility.

A major cause of this misunderstanding is lack of forthrightness regarding profits. Private business will not go to an underdeveloped country unless it expects to earn more than in the United States. I do not know any branch of American manufacturing into which considerable new venture capital would go today in expectation of a profit less than 10 per cent after corporate taxes. But even "profit after tax" is an economist's or accountant's way of thinking. The businessman thinks rather in terms of the "payout time" when depreciation is added to profit after tax: how quickly will an investment return the money put into it? Generally in the United States today, manufacturing business looks for a "payout" of five years or less. It is vain to expect large holdings of liquid private capital, even those originating in an underdeveloped country, to remain in that country, in the absence of inertia or exchange control, if capital can earn substantially more in the United States. In fact private capital today flows *to* the United States from almost every underdeveloped country, and—excepting countries with major oil or mineral developments—generally in larger volume than the flow in the opposite direction.

Manufacturing production cost is generally higher in underdeveloped countries than in North America. Hourly wage rates are low, but labor costs per unit of output high. An American manufacturer commonly has to pay his key American "expatriate" personnel twice as much to stay in an underdeveloped country. Transportation, power, and non-local materials cost more. Where American firms do establish branch plants abroad they are often saving on transportation costs for bulky articles, rather than saving on lower manufacturing costs. Still more often they are merely saving on customs charges, by getting inside a tariff wall, or assuring themselves a preferential position in import licensing.

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Private enterprise is scarce in underdeveloped countries. Even in so advanced a country as Italy, the government had to conclude in 1954 that there was not enough private enterprise to develop its south. The south accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the total population, yet the national authorities concluded ". . . in the south of Italy—despite its many advantages compared with other underdeveloped areas—almost all the new industrial activities of importance have been promoted by groups which have their entrepreneurial center outside the area, or else by the State." Despite the subsequent economic boom in northern Italy, the south did not develop independent, local, and private enterprise—nor did northern industry come south in significant volume—but the growth of the south remained dependent on continuous government action. If private enterprise does not suffice for the south of Italy, it is difficult to believe that it will suffice for all needs in Argentina or India. The friends of private enterprise do it no favor by making claims for it that cannot be met.

VI

In 1951 a group of United Nations economists estimated that the underdeveloped countries (including those in the Communist bloc) would need a capital import, private and public, of about $10 billion annually to achieve a 2 per cent annual increase in income per head. Their estimate was pooh-poohed by other economists who pretended to a more tough-minded, realistic knowledge of what underdeveloped countries could absorb productively.

The tough-minded, unfortunately, have no more knowledge in this matter than the tender. The former are really speaking of what they did not do last year, and the latter of what they would like to do in the future. Such relatively small countries as South Korea, Viet Nam, and Israel have shown that they can each absorb (though not invest productively) roughly $300 million a year. Israel has never had any difficulty in absorbing from abroad $150 or more annually per head of its population. If India were to absorb $5 per capita, she would require about $2 billion annually; Indonesia, on the same $5 basis, would require $425 million annually and Pakistan a similar amount. The American Telephone and Telegraph system absorbed $2.5 billion in 1957, and Standard Oil of New Jersey nearly $1.5 billion. We must not allow pseudo-experts to impose upon us the nonsense that the economic growth of backward and numerous peoples can be assured by trifling investments.

Washington spokesmen for Technical Assistance sold their program to the Congress and the public on the ground that it would buy economic development cheap. In the days of the Marshall Plan, grown men were explaining in Washington that the countries of Western Europe needed "economic" assistance, but the underdeveloped countries needed only "technical" assistance, which could be supplied by several hundreds or thousands of United States technicians. In fact, despite the efforts made by a small number of devoted and able people, the Technical Assistance program has had only modest accomplishments. Its greater successes were achieved with foreign people brought to the United States, rather than with United States personnel sent abroad. We have not sent our best people abroad—not even in agriculture, where the United States government is rich in know-how. We could not, in any case, do with American personnel that work of labor-training in depth, involving hundreds of millions of people, which the underdeveloped countries have to do for themselves and for which they require capital as well as knowledge. United States technical assistance personnel abroad characteristically work out of centralized American offices and develop an American enclave. Valuable contributions have been made in many countries, but over and over again the Technical Assistance program has come to be looked upon as something the United States wants, not something the host

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country wants. In these respects, the United Nations technical assistance organizations seem to have done better than the United States.

The psychological atmosphere of our "foreign aid" program has been strained because it is largely a program of bilateral grants or gifts, without the veil of distance or the cement of community between giver and recipient. Only a genuine feeling of shared purposes would make bearable the reality of gifts coming, year after year, from one side. Even if we disregard military grants, the United States *gave* $29 billion in the twelve years after the end of World War II and *loaned* only $11 billion. The loans also had much of the atmosphere of grants because they were not given for commercial considerations on a business basis. They were given only because corresponding loans were not attainable on a business basis. This is not comparable to the case of New York being taxed for Mississippi, within the boundaries of a recognized community. There is no such moral community. The U. S. government bestows its bounty, as a matter of grace, on the recipient country, generally after haggling and often for political and military considerations. The position of the recipient is basically demeaning, and there is rarely adequate understanding of his psychological problem. The foreigners who are closest to the United States aid program, on a day to day operating level, are not always its most sincere missionaries.

Manners could be much improved, but the real underlying moral and political problems of bilateral grants are hardly avoidable so long as the United States is the only principal net contributor. The U. S. did not agree, in substance, even to let the European beneficiaries, as a regional group, share out the resources made available under the Marshall Plan. It is much more dubious that we shall have the breadth of mind to let regional groups of underdeveloped peoples participate effectively in doing what we denied Western Europe. Yet, unless we disengage ourselves from the underdeveloped countries, we shall certainly find that there is occasion to provide them with grants for education, health, relief from catastrophes, and a variety of other needs—probably including, in some cases, agriculture and transportation. We shall prefer to call these needs temporary or special, and sensitive concern for the recipients may be evidenced in calling them that. But let us not deceive ourselves. They will not be temporary or special, but recurrent for decades to come. We shall be fortunate if we can wisely and safely convert our non-military foreign aid program from a loan basis of about 25 per cent in the past twelve years to a loan basis of perhaps 50 per cent in the next decade, and perhaps 75 per cent in the longer run. It is in fine spirit for Yugoslavia or Burma to say that they do not wish to have grants but only loans; yet it may be doubted that Yugoslavia and Burma will be able to hold to that austere position; and others certainly cannot. Lending itself cannot honestly be separated from granting with the severity some would like. There would be no need for intergovernmental lending if the loans were really made on nothing more than a business basis. Even such governments as those of the United Kingdom, Germany, or Italy could sell only trifling quantities of long-term obligations on the private U. S. capital market. The consequences of attempting such flotations would be so undignified that none of these governments would dare try this course.

WASHINGTON has devoted a great deal of effort in recent years to the search for "sound" loan projects and "hard" loans in underdeveloped countries. Unfortunately the whole search has proceeded from a fundamentally inadequate philosophy. Loans have been regarded as "sound" and "hard" if their period of repayment is relatively short and the rate of interest high; the truth is the opposite. A high rate of interest tends to make a loan "soft" because it imposes a heavy burden on the balance of payments of the recipient country. India might be able to carry a foreign indebtedness of $20 billion

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at 2.5 per cent interest twenty years from now; the interest burden would be only a half billion dollars annually. This same quantum of loans might become very "soft" indeed at the current rates of 5.75 per cent or 6 per cent, which Washington misconceives to be "hard." There is no grant that we can better afford to give than the grant of a low rate of interest. If this be "mixing up" grants and loans, that is the kind of mixing up we need.

Sound finance requires also that we avoid short-term lending. It is unlikely that any underdeveloped country will be able to sustain a general outward flow of capital, and still retain a healthy, growing economy, at any time during the forty-odd years that remain to the 20th century. The United States, under much more favorable circumstances, could hardly have done so in the forty years that followed our civil war. Underdeveloped countries will be able safely to repay on individual loans and investments only within a framework of general net capital inflow. A relatively short period of repayment on an individual loan to an underdeveloped country makes sense financially only if it is conceived within the framework of a general plan (or general conditions) in which there is sustained over-all net new lending or investing. If the United States wishes to assist the poorest peoples through lending on a scale commensurate with their needs, we will have to do net lending for decades and receive no net repayment. Short-term lending is self-deception. The only reasoned, consistent alternative to long-term operations is systematic disengagement and non-participation.

VII

THE 1958 Washington season for defending foreign aid appropriations has now opened. Those who both favor foreign aid and prefer a tough-minded role are engaged already in explaining how much the United States will gain economically and strategically from a larger program of assistance to the underdeveloped countries. On the economic side, this issue gets involved with the effort for a more liberal import policy. President Eisenhower has joined the issues of Mutual Aid and Mutual Trade. The proponents are the same, the motives somewhat akin, the reasoning similar.

As economic reasoning, the tough-minded case is greatly exaggerated with respect to trade policy, and largely specious with respect to development assistance. However, no other advocacy is regarded as realistic in Washington. Appeal is made to motives that are presumed to exist.

The issue of freer access of imports is, of course, by far the simpler one. The economic advantage to the United States from such liberalization is argued partly on the classical ground of the gain from far-reaching international division of labor, and partly on some pseudo-Keynesian ground that freer international trade would make for more stable demand. These arguments fly in the face of the sustained tendency of technology to diminish the gain to the United States from trading with remote corners of the earth. The American domestic market is already so large as to permit great economies of scale. Our imports, at about $15 billion annually, are barely more than 4 per cent of the national income. How much richer will we be if we expand imports to 5 per cent? Surely the United States does gain something from international trade, but the significance of the gain to be anticipated from further import liberalization is trifling. Indeed the United States has reached the stage where it would be only very inconvenient, but not catastrophically difficult, to limit our imports practically to the Americas. Our really substantial imports consist of things like coffee, petroleum, forest products, iron ore, wool, sugar, copper, aluminum, and nickel, which are largely on the free list and can readily be obtained in the Americas. Only 20 per cent of our imports consist of finished manufactures (and of these about one-quarter are paper). Honest advocacy of American import liberalization should be based primarily on the benefits to the foreign sellers, not the positive income effect on the United States. Import liberali-

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zation may be the discharge of part of our obligations to world citizenship. It is not an important piece of business for the U. S.

Much less is aid to underdeveloped countries a shrewd piece of business. Any comprehensive program of aid to the poorest peoples will involve gifts and losses. *When we make large, long-term loans, we are making a wager on the political, social, and economic future of humanity*—a wager that can be lost, altogether or in part, by error or mischance, now or in the remote future. There is no buying insurance against such losses. It is of course true that we may give to the underdeveloped countries output that we might otherwise not produce. We suffer chronically from inadequate utilization of our productive capacity, and we could certainly, in principle, produce more for them without having less for us. But, broadly speaking, the same financial and fiscal policies which would enable us to produce additional output for *them* would also enable us to produce the same quantity of additional output for *us*. If we can produce additionally to supply equipment and materials for a hospital in Calcutta, we can build the same hospital in Chicago. And if in Calcutta one houses a million people that now sleep and die in the streets, one may find that another million have moved in to take their places.

When we reason economically about aid to the poorest peoples, we will reason most clearly if we do so primarily in terms of conflicting claims, rather than harmony. One calls to mind the troubled words set down, almost a century ago, by the English philosopher, Henry Sidgwick: "Life shows us the conflict and the discord: on one side are the claims of harmonious self-development, on the other the cries of struggling humanity: we have hitherto let our sympathies expand along with our other refined instincts, but now they threaten to sweep us into regions from which those refined instincts shrink." In southern Europe and Latin America, still more in Asia and Africa, there is much from which refined instincts may initially shrink.

VIII

In Washington, conventionally and for some years now, the toughest minds have been regarded as those who argue for aid to underdeveloped countries as a piece of military strategy. This is still the dominant thinking early in 1958, and it seems likely to remain dominant at least for a few years. Already in 1957, however, there was evidence that some long-term military thinking was beginning to move in another direction: to join up with political advocacy of disengagement; to favor less involvement in Central Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa; and to take a more sympathetic view even of a long-term strategy approaching hemispheric isolation.

A formulation of this revised model of American foreign policy was put forward at the time of the Suez crisis by businessmen, bankers, and generals who are greatly respected in Washington. This formulation ran as follows: There has been no new Eisenhower foreign policy, but only a continuation of the Truman foreign policy; the Truman policy begins with the Truman Doctrine, goes on to NATO, and ends by involving us in Korean wars; for a true NATO there are no partners, and that was demonstrated in Korea, in Indochina, and at Port Said; the United States is a world power, while Britain and France are not powers at all; American commitments are too great and too rigid; the United States should disassociate itself from Britain and France in the Middle East and Africa, cut down its involvements, and resume a free hand to make sensible deals with the Russians or anyone else; the Suez crisis is a blessing in disguise because it permits withdrawal from the whole Truman foreign policy.

For 1957 and 1958 the policy of disengagement was rejected. Mr. Eisenhower went to Paris, and Mr. Dulles has gone to Baghdad. The "rigid" Eisenhower Doctrine was added to the Truman Doctrine. The U. S. has no intercontinental missile, and the lack weighs heavily. During the next few years, the Russians may be able to kill us from Moscow, while we will be able to kill them only from

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England, or Turkey, or Italy, or Japan. In a few years, however, if we are still alive, we shall also have intercontinental missiles. We may then be able to kill from Maine where now we can kill only from Milan. The defense of America in all-out war will then need much less forward-lying real-estate. Indeed, such bases may come to be regarded militarily as a danger and a nuisance, an involvement from which the United States should disengage itself as rapidly as possible. The "manpower" and the "strategic positions" of the underdeveloped countries now figure largely in Mr. Dulles's speeches—they may come to be regarded as being of little weight.

We shall not disengage quickly from Western Europe: the historic attachment is too great. We shall not disengage from the other countries of the Americas; indeed we may move closer toward economic integration. Japan and the islands of the Pacific are strong outposts. But Mr. Kennan's views may still prevail; and the United States may withdraw from Central Europe despite the views of our West German ally. Similarly, following Mr. Kennan, the United States may become less "rigid" in the Middle East and recognize the realities of Russian power at the expense of our Middle Eastern associates. If one is so little rigid regarding Western Germany and the Middle East, surely there will be no sense in being rigid about continental southeastern Asia or about troublesome countries in Africa? We may easily by then have had a bellyful of the attempt to help these countries. On present policies, limited economic accomplishment and frustrated nationalism are in any case likely to bring forward disturbing, pro-Communist groups in many of those countries. Will not the national interest then dictate total disengagement where our fragmentary participation will have accomplished so little to our taste? At the very least, no one should conclude that the United States will necessarily continue into the late 1960's to have the same strategic interest in many underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa as we have now in the closing years of the 1950's. It is no accident that Mr. Kennan, the currently acknowledged spokesman for disengagement, is also a consistent opponent of economic aid to underdeveloped countries.

IX

In aiding the poorest peoples, we risk disappointment if we assume that we shall, with great probability, accomplish any purpose other than their economic improvement. Our economic gain is at best dubious. Our strategic advantage may be questioned within a decade. The people in question will almost certainly not be grateful: the poor are not commonly grateful for benefits obtained from the rich. They will not accomplish economic growth without social conflicts, and we shall thus necessarily be associating ourselves with some social forces against others. In the measure in which the underdeveloped countries come to share our adherence to political democracy and a humane culture, they will not choose to associate themselves with world Communism. But their political democracy will certainly not be ours, and they will have their own conceptions of the individual and the community. The roles of private entrepreneurship and state entrepreneurship will be different with them as their histories differ, their supply of private entrepreneurship differs, and their objectives differ. And there can be no moral or political assurance for the distant future. Even so great a center of Western civilization as Italy may one day, as the result of developments we cannot foresee, be transformed into a Communist society. But shall we then say everything constructive achieved there with our aid was in vain?

The two poles of our national approach to the various underdeveloped countries may be defined as participation and disengagement. The limit of participation is a universalism that makes no distinctions among peoples and governments. The limit of disengagement is a moral isolationism in which obligation does not reach beyond national frontiers, and which regards foreign peoples

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only as instruments of our national interest. Any reasoned position between these extremes will choose selective participation where there is some hopeful outlook of return for effort, and measured disengagement from things beyond effective reach and repair. The enemies of any reasoned position are an unwillingness to deal with grave problems before they force themselves upon attention; daily evasions and improvisations; fine words and lame actions; a participation that does not choose its company well; a disengagement that does not set firm limits.

With respect to these fundamentals of policy, it is not sound to make a sweeping partisan distinction between the present Eisenhower administration and the former Truman administration. The over-valuation of technical assistance was characteristic of the Truman period; so also was the systematic neglect of Latin America, the reservation of economic plans and programs to Europe, and the general preference for improvisations in dealing with underdeveloped countries. The Truman administration did not make a virtue of the vice of short-term lending, and Truman was too cagey to be taken in by the advocates of high interest rates. The Eisenhower administration, as it prides itself unwarrantedly on good management, must accept responsibility for the steady deterioration in the status and quality of government personnel, in foreign aid as elsewhere. The present administration is also not without responsibility for the fact that the sympathies of many underdeveloped countries have been further estranged. Yet the Truman administration was creative in foreign policy. Perhaps, in the perspective of time, the most severe indictment of its successor will be that it genuinely believed itself to have come to power in quiet times, permitting relaxation of effort, and demanding only routine administration and conventional integrity. It saw no need for novel ideas or striking initiatives. In those spheres where it inherited little, it added almost nothing.

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ZIONIST IDEOLOGY AND WORLD JEWRY

Reflections on a Conference

OSCAR HANDLIN

I BEGAN to pull my thoughts together on the beach at Ascalon.

After almost a week of debate, in a hall heavy with emotional oratory, the Sabbath had come as a relief. We had driven across the hot Judean hills to the seashore. The young people had welcomed me—a stranger but a guest—into the intimacy of their friendship. As reserve and shyness melted, our conversation grew lively and unself-conscious. We talked directly, about what they were doing and about what I thought; and we relaxed in the ease of mutual understanding.

I hadn't brought my bathing trunks with me and had to sit in the shade while the young Israelis plunged gaily into the surf. I looked about me. There was nothing foreign in the teen-agers who posed for snapshots, in the families who had brought their lunches down from Tel Aviv. The understanding that had appeared to be out of reach around the conference tables came almost as a matter of course here. In the months that have since gone by, I have not ceased to wonder what obstruction back there at Givath Ram distorted the flow of our discussion so that we could not recognize one another's words.

The "Ideological Conference" had been summoned to meet at Jerusalem on August 8, 1957, to discuss ideas. It had become entangled with issues emanating from the struggle for power. And it had drifted away from contact with reality. That, in substance, was the source of the confusion.

When the Jewish Agency called together a group of scholars and other intellectuals from many parts of the world, it asked them to consider certain broad issues arising "out of the unity of the Jewish people and our generation's desire and duty to support the State of Israel as the central force of Jewish existence now and in the future." It was concerned with "the place of Judaism and the Jewish people in the clash of world ideologies; the role of the State of Israel in Jewish life"; "the struggle of the free Diaspora centers to preserve Jewish cultural values and identity"; and the obligations of the individual to his tradition, his community, and to the State of Israel.

This certainly was a valid basis for discussion. For the Zionists, it reflected a significant interest, ten years after independence and with the State's existence secure, in the continuing question of its purpose. For the non-Zionists, these problems were also important. Accepting the fact that a common tradition and a common history gave Jews a sense of identity, they wished to preserve and diffuse the values and ideals of the group, but denied its political character. Accepting also the obligation to support the State of Israel as a new type of Jewish life, they questioned whether Israel actually was likely to become the central focus of Jewish existence. Instead they expressed the hope that relations among Jews of different countries would be mutually stimulating and fruitful. Here certainly was a basis for lively discussion. Yet the conference no sooner got under way than it became clear that vigorous cross-currents of a struggle for power would also have a part in the proceedings.

THE complications and confusions in present thinking about the relationship of Israel to world Jewry, as mirrored in last August's international gathering of Jewish scholars and spokesmen in Jerusalem, are commented on by a participant in the conference, OSCAR HANDLIN, the well-known American historian and a regular contributor to these pages.

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One aspect of that struggle was apparent in the physical disposition of the conference chamber. On either side of the platform were two rows of reserved seats. Looking out at the ideologues from the speaker's left were the members of the Israeli government, while on the right sat the executives of the Jewish Agency. The two camps were clearly ready to do battle for the minds of the participants. They continued a conflict which goes back almost to the establishment of the State of Israel. At stake were the future of the World Zionist movement and the control of the channels of communication between Israel and the Diaspora.

ALL along, the Israeli leaders have argued that the only true builders of the State were those who actually immigrated. Only they had the right to share in the decisions that would shape its future. Others of every shade of opinion might wish to help, and their aid was welcome. But so long as they themselves did not make the commitment of actual *aliyah*, they had no claim to participate in the formulation of Israeli policy. The veteran Zionist leaders of the Agency have long resented these efforts to confine them to a subordinate role in the movement to which they have given their lives. They are unwilling to be excluded from positions in which they can influence the course of future events in Israel; and they fear that the general devaluation of their role will diminish their status in the Diaspora as well. If they are not to be builders of the State, but merely helpers from without, their relationship to it would not differ much from that of the non-Zionists back home.

These considerations led to significant efforts, on both sides, to redefine Zionist theory. Ben Gurion led the Israeli government forces. In a lengthy and eloquent address, he launched a bitter attack upon Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Organization and of the Jewish Agency. The basic premise of his argument was the need for immediacy. Only those who resolved to migrate to Israel at once deserved the designation Zionist. Any contribution short of that was but the gesture of the sympathizer. This proposition was supported by two related chains of reasoning. First, life in "exile" inexorably threatened Jewish existence. With the possible exception of the United States—and even that was by no means certain—no country east or west of the Iron Curtain provided a soil for development of Jewish life. As in the past, Jews were doomed to lose their identity. Either assimilation would dissolve their unity in the surrounding culture, or anti-Semitism would exterminate them. In either case they were lost to the hope of survival.

Given these premises, there was only one logical Zionist program—immediate migration to Israel. Now was a time for decision. Men must choose either to be among those who labored to save themselves and the State, or remain behind in the fading light of the Diaspora. There could be no compromise.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann responded for the World Zionist Organization. Ben Gurion's attack had been personal as well as organizational; the Prime Minister had openly taunted Goldmann for his unwillingness to surrender his American passport and throw in his lot with Israel. Goldmann retorted in kind. His reply was delivered in Yiddish, which not only gave him a more extensive armory of invective than Hebrew, but also suggested a continued loyalty to Jewish life outside Israel. He made the obvious points: not everyone could move at once, the new country could not absorb them all, and not all were equally ready for *aliyah*. It might take a hundred years or more before all the scattered remnants were gathered together. Meantime it was expedient that some Jews should, for the moment, remain where they could use their influence to sustain the State. Otherwise Israel might sink to the status of a tiny Levantine country without control over its own destiny and without effect upon the rest of the world. Toward the end of his address, the flow of his rhetoric swept Goldmann toward an impassioned defense of the Diaspora, though he did not repudiate the Zionist ideal of an ultimate return

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to the homeland. Rather he emphasized the distant, long-term character of that return and seemed to be groping for some philosophy that would justify Zionist life in exile. Hence the importance of the pragmatic argument which defended the utility of an indefinite sojourn in the Diaspora, on the grounds of its utility for Israel.

But it was precisely on this point that the Prime Minister would not compromise. He announced that Israel was ready to absorb all Jews who wished to "return"—including those in the Soviet Union. There could be no better security for the State than to triple its population forthwith. That practical considerations might stand in the way he categorically refused to admit. Time and again Ben Gurion has pointed out that if Zionism had been swayed by practical considerations there would have been no state at all. His faith seems grounded in and sustained by his Bible reading. Let there be an end to the cautious calculations of the ghetto and a return to the heroic daring of the *Tanach!*

THE veteran Zionists of the Agency were dismayed by this stand. They could not escape practical considerations. They, after all, would have to raise the funds. It required $10,000 to settle each family. Where would the money come from? The Agency executives furthermore had some inkling of the dangers inherent in an announcement that the loyalties of Russian Jews were attached not to the Soviet fatherland but to Israel. Who would be responsible if the Kremlin were to revive the accusation of cosmopolitanism? They also seemed conscious of the effect on the Arabs—fearful of "Zionist imperialism"—of any suggestion that Israel might triple its population.

Ben Gurion's line attracted wide popular support, but within the conference hall there were Israelis who took issue with him. The logic of his exposition raised issues that involved deep disagreements. The dialogue with Goldmann was quickly transformed into a general debate among the Israelis.

Thus, Ben Gurion's predecessor in office, Moshe Sharett, made a moderate, scholarly attempt to find a middle ground between the Prime Minister and the Agency. On the other hand, Ben Gurion was also criticized by more extreme Israelis, who used the occasion to attack the government. From the left, a dissident member of Mapai found Israel too subservient to the United States. He agreed that rapid immigration was essential, but American Jews would never come, so that hope lay in *aliyah* from Russia; and that called for a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. From the right, Hillel Kook demanded that the State recognize that it was indeed a Mediterranean country and follow a vigorous independent line.

A more disturbing challenge to Ben Gurion's position came from religiously oriented critics. Political elements were involved here too; while the conference met, there were fierce debates outside it over the laws for Sabbath observance. But considerations of another order moved Martin Buber and Dr. Shragai, a former mayor of Jerusalem, to attack Ben Gurion's position. These speakers resented the implication that the establishment of the State had ushered in the Messianic age. They were uncomfortable in the face of the Prime Minister's mystical veneration of the *Tanach;* and they insisted that the task of spiritual reconstruction involved the traditions of the past two thousand years—even though those traditions were the products of Diaspora.

The skillful mediating efforts made by Professor Nathan Rotenstreich of the Hebrew University could not bridge the gap. Indeed on only one point did the Israeli participants agree—in their deep underlying resentment of the Diaspora, particularly of the United States, the home of the world's largest Jewish community. With memories of Suez still fresh, there was a disposition to blame all Israel's difficulties on the country's excessive dependence on America. And that dependence, Professor Yehudah Leibowitz pointed out, had too often been cultural and spiritual as well as economic and political.

A unifying theme ran through the indictment of American Jews: they had chosen to

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sit among the fleshpots; they left their television sets only to ride in their big cars to their country clubs. Even their religion had become corrupt. All the talk in America of the Judeo-Christian tradition was but an aspect of "public relations," stripped of authentic values. The swimming pool had become the center of the synagogue. Meanwhile, blinded by the appearance of prosperity, the Jews were unaware of the dangers of anti-Semitism. The task of Zionism, it was agreed, was to build ghettos to isolate the Jews from the life of exile, and to prepare them for the day when they would at last become aware of their destiny.

THE visitors were dumbfounded. They had no feeling that they were personally under attack; there was too much warmth in the hospitality extended to them. What concerned them was the thought that the prevalent misunderstanding would cut off any profitable exchange of ideas.

Some of the foreign participants therefore devoted their talks to explanations of conditions in their own countries. Professor André Chouraqui spoke of France; Professor Cecil Roth, of England; and this writer, of the United States. Professor Salo Baron gave a thoughtful analysis of the history of the Diaspora, emphasizing its potentialities and questioning the inevitability of an anti-Semitic debacle. Professor Roth stressed the tradition of universality among Jews, as an *Am Olam* spread among the nations. The Yiddish poet Halpern Leivick condemned the derogation of the *Galut* and proudly described its achievements. It was significant that despite the great range of difference among these speakers they were united in rejecting the estimate Israelis made of the Diaspora. Some went beyond self-defense to point to shortcomings in Israel. This tendency was particularly striking among such American delegates as Professors Mordecai Kaplan, A. J. Heschel, and Robert Gordis, who are concerned with Israel as a factor in the revival of religious Judaism in the United States. Professor Kaplan indeed was optimistic enough to bring with him a project for a formal covenant to signal that relationship. Unhappily, the comments made by prominent Israelis revealed that they thought these speakers as inaccurate in their judgment of Israel as the visitors on their part considered the Israelis inept in their judgment of the Diaspora.

What accounted for this mutual incomprehension? At first it seemed as if ignorance were responsible. Many Israeli intellectuals still carry about stereotypes of capitalist society inherited from East European socialism. They really do not know what the United States is like, and see it through the spectacles of a diluted, but still old-fashioned, Marxism. But there is a more stubborn obtuseness among those who condemn the United States as "materialistic." In all those days of discussion, there was never a reflection on what the world would be like if America in the past two decades had acted only in response to its own immediate interests. Mrs. Golda Meir, who certainly knows this country, spoke with emotion of the solicitude of Israeli youth for the fate of Jews elsewhere, as if that were a sentiment unique to them. Clearly it was not want of information that kept her from realizing that since the war it has been the Cadillac-riding members of country clubs who have assumed the immense burden of reconstruction in Israel and throughout the world, and that they did so not from a desire to prepare a future place of refuge for themselves, but out of *Ahavath Yisroel*, the love of their fellow men.

At one point Mrs. Meir commented that "Jewish youth singing about the Negev in New York and Boston will not build up our wastelands." True, but she might have added, "Neither will Jewish youth in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem."

The intellectual and political elite of Israel consists of dedicated men and women who made enormous personal sacrifices to bring an ideal into being. But they themselves do not find the same spirit extending on through the oncoming generations. Some years ago Ben Gurion went off to labor in the desert, as a model to Israeli youth, but

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the young people did not follow. They preferred the cities, and the new settlements are now being filled with immigrants who have no choice as to their destination. Thoughtful Israelis are troubled by forebodings as they reflect upon the decline of pioneering, the growing desire for material comfort. There is a kind of consolation, therefore, in thinking of the greater guilt of Jews abroad, particularly in America. The responsibility for the failure of those who have not migrated is magnified by the degree to which the comforts of New York are superior to those of Tel Aviv. The *Galut* thus becomes a vast distorted counter-image in which Israelis see exposed the deficiencies they are unwilling to examine in themselves.

Some of the critical comments on Israel by Americans were motivated by the same tendency to seek in the other community compensations for one's own shortcomings. Thus the talk about the role of Israel as a source of religious and cultural inspiration for the Jews of the United States was wide of the mark. It reflected an awareness of the poverty of American resources, rather than an appraisal of the actual situation of Israel, which will find it difficult enough in the next few decades to maintain present standards. When Robert Gordis and Mordecai Kaplan, among others, assigned to Israel the task of generating spiritual inspiration for export, they expressed an American need rather than an Israeli hope.

The tendency on the part of Jews outside Israel to think of it as existing to remedy their own weaknesses—like the obverse tendency of Israelis to judge the *Galut* by the standard of their own desires—is at the heart of the misunderstandings that plagued the conference. Until that tendency is dispelled, it will be difficult to undertake any kind of meaningful exchange of ideas.

On the beach at Ascalon, the misunderstandings seemed to fade away, and the argument became irrelevant. The mothers and their children, the boys and their girls, were not abstract symbols, but people. Their impulses to thought and action emanated from their own situation, not from a role created for them by the needs of others. When I told them of the talk in the conference hall at Givath Ram, they stared at me in blank incomprehension. What did all that have to do with them?

Later, after I had myself spoken in the conference debate, a young man in the audience, whom I did not know and whom I never saw again, slipped me an eloquent note. He asked me not to judge Israeli opinion by the "ideological imperialism" of those over fifty. The Zionist issues that occupied their elders no longer had much meaning for the youth of Israel, who were tired of platitudes and current conventional fictions. They were more interested in a freer exchange of ideas outside existing institutional channels.

There are encouraging indications that this is not the isolated expression of an eccentric individual. A good part of Ben Gurion's popularity with youth comes from his willingness to challenge the clichés of the official Zionist line. In any case, this is the most promising basis for deepening the understanding between the Jews of Israel and those of the Diaspora. Only by accepting the fact that Israel and the Diaspora exist for their own sake and not to redeem one another, that they are to be judged in their own terms and not by extraneous standards, will we arrive at a mutually fructifying interchange of experiences.

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HALTING THE CURRENT RECESSION

A Proposal for Dealing with "Sellers' Inflation"

ABBA P. LERNER

WHEN the United Automobile Workers International Union (UAW) recently invited the three big automobile corporations to take a first step in checking the inflationary process by lowering 1958 automobile prices, the corporations in effect replied, "After you, Alphonse." Yet the proposals and counter-proposals must be recognized as something more than sparrings for future bargaining positions. They clearly demonstrate three phenomena of the first importance: (1) a genuine concern, on both sides, with the dangers of inflation, (2) a readiness to cooperate in checking the inflation (provided that such cooperation is not exploited and diverted for the benefit of the other side), and (3) a recognition that the inflation we now have is based not on competition by *buyers* trying to buy more of everything than can be supplied, but on pressure by *sellers* asking for higher prices.

Others also have recognized that our current inflation is not the familiar kind that is caused by excess buyers' demand—by "too much money chasing too few goods," i.e. by buyers bidding up prices in trying to get more goods than the economy is able to supply. Thus President Eisenhower showed awareness of the truth in his appeal to labor and business to exercise restraint and refrain from demanding higher wages and prices. If our inflation were indeed caused by excess buyers' demand, not only would the UAW proposals and the corporations' rejoinders be without interest, but the President's appeal would have been pointless. Free market prices would still be bid up by competing buyers, and sellers who exercised restraint would merely be making presents to the buyers (who would often be able to resell at the higher free market prices). Such an inflation could be cured only by removing the excess buyers' demand through the well-known policies of tight money and restrictive fiscal measures, and the restraint called for by President Eisenhower would be unnecessary.

But excess demand by buyers is *not* the only possible cause of inflation, and our inflation is not the kind that is caused by such excess demand. This is shown by the failure of output to keep up with growing productive capacity. It does not seem to be the case at all that we are unable to supply the current over-all demand for goods and services. On the contrary, we are able to supply more than is being demanded of almost every product, and efforts by sellers to persuade the public to buy are as strenuous as ever (though they hardly ever take the form of lowering prices, or we would not be suffering from inflation). Prices are rising not because of the pressure of *buyers* who are finding it difficult to buy. Prices are rising because of pressures by *sellers* who insist on increasing prices (even though they are finding it not so easy to sell). We may say that what we have is not a *buyers' inflation* but a *sellers' inflation*, and it is this problem that I wish to discuss.

THE United States is at present in the paradoxical situation of appearing to suffer from inflation and depression at the same time—prices are rising, while employment is declining. In this article, ABBA P. LERNER, the well-known economist and author of numerous works of economic analysis, examines the nature of what he describes as "sellers' inflation" and suggests means of countering it. Mr. Lerner is visiting professor at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. His article "The Myth of the Parasitic Middleman" appeared in the July 1949 number of COMMENTARY.

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Sellers' inflation, unlike buyers' inflation is compatible with depression. Prices are rising because of upward pressure by sellers, and the authorities, in endeavoring to stop the inflation, have taken steps which have been very effective in removing excess demand, but which have not removed the upward pressure on prices from the sellers' side. Indeed these measures of budgetary restraint and tight money have been so effective in removing excess demand that they have removed some demand that was *not* in excess. They have brought about a condition of *deficient demand,* so that there has not been enough demand to enable us to make full use of our productive potential. So much so that the visible appearance of symptoms of recession has recently led to a slight loosening of the tight money policy. The net result is that we are now suffering at the same time from both inflation *and* depression—prices are rising, and at the same time we are not fully utilizing our available labor force and productive potential.

This appears paradoxical only because of our habit of using one word, "inflation," to represent two different things—rising prices and excess demand—that do not necessarily have to go together in the actual world. We can avoid this confusion by using the word "inflation" only to mean rising prices, and saying "excess demand" if we mean excess demand.

Many people still seem to argue as if the only kind of inflation possible is buyers' inflation (which they usually call demand inflation). Although they cannot deny that they see excesses of potential supply much more often than excesses of buyers' demand, they insist that "there ain't no such animal" as sellers' inflation. They hold that "inflation is inflation," and they sternly dismiss as dodging of the necessary medicine all talk about a new kind of inflation that does not respond to the orthodox treatment of monetary and fiscal restrictions.

Unfortunately, such sternness is only too understandable. Some of the economists who were early to recognize the nature of sellers' inflation have been so impressed by the impossibility of dealing with it by the orthodox instruments of monetary and fiscal policy that they have capitulated to the temptation of dallying with "mild" or "moderate" inflation as part of an acceptable policy. The orthodox economists quite rightly point out that such an attitude is indefensible either on moral or on practical grounds. Even a "mild" inflation accumulates at "compound interest" and robs pensioners, fixed-income receivers, and many other unfortunate victims, while it sabotages the proper calculations and accountings necessary for wise economic decisions. In time, many of these faults could be corrected by institutional adjustments, but to keep the inflation "mild" is more difficult than to prevent it from starting in the first place, or to stop it before it gets less "mild." Firmness is required and not appeasement.

But the naughtiness of the appeasers does not diminish the importance of recognizing the existence of sellers' inflation, for it is not the *recognition* of the disease that opens the gates to the enemy. On the contrary, it is the denial of its existence that is so dangerous. The belief that the medicines appropriate for buyers' inflation are the only medicines available, when joined with the discovery that these do not work, gives rise to defeatism and appeasement. A clear recognition of the nature of sellers' inflation is the prerequisite for finding the medicine that can cure it.

Another reason for reluctance to recognize sellers' inflation is that it has often been called "cost inflation" or "wage-cost inflation," thus giving the impression that the whole of the blame falls on labor or on the trade unions. When trade unions raise wages by more than can be absorbed by increasing productivity, costs rise. The employer then seems to be completely innocent of "profit inflation" in passing on the increase in costs, as long as he does not increase his rate of mark-up, i.e. as long as he does not increase the prices he charges for the product in a greater proportion than his costs have increased. There is, however, no essential asymmetry between the wage element and the profit element in the price asked for the

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product. A sellers' inflation could just as well be started by an increase, not in the wage asked, but in the percentage of mark-up of price above cost. Prices would rise, and wages would then be raised by the workers in attempts to maintain (or restore) their original buying power. Business would then "innocently" raise prices again in proportion to the increase in costs, and we would have the inflation upon us, as well as a boring discussion about who started it first.

The "who started it first" debate is a waste of time because there is no "original" situation in which there was a "just" or "normal" distribution of the product between wages and profits. Any increase can be seen either as a disturbance of equilibrium or as the correction of an inequity perpetrated in previous history—all depending on the point of view. The term "sellers' inflation," by treating wages and profits on exactly the same footing, avoids the fruitless game of mutual recrimination. Sellers' inflation takes place whenever wage-earners and profit-takers together attempt to get shares that amount to more than 100 per cent of the selling price. When the sum of what they try to get comes to more than 100 per cent of the selling price, it is futile to ask whether this is because the wages demanded are too high, or because the profits insisted on are too great. No matter where justice may lie between the two claims, the only significant thing for our problem is that the sum of the claims is more than 100 per cent. That is what causes inflation.

It is of course impossible for the two parties to succeed in getting more than 100 per cent of the proceeds between them, but it is precisely on an impossibility such as this that any continuing process depends. Buyers' inflation is similarly built on an attempt to reach the impossible. In that case it is the attempt of buyers *to buy more than 100 per cent* of the goods that can be made available. Their attempt bids up prices, but since that does not (and cannot) enable them to obtain more than 100 per cent of the goods, they go on with the attempt, and we have the continuing process of buyers' inflation. In our case, what generates the process is the attempt of wage-earners and profit-takers between them to *get more than 100 per cent* of the money proceeds from the sale of the product. Each increases the part he tries to take, by increasing wages or by increasing prices. Since they cannot succeed, they keep on raising wages and prices and so we have the continuing process of sellers' inflation.

AN INTERESTING indication of the strength of the most important element in the set-up—the general feeling of the propriety and inevitability of continuing wage and cost increases (to be "passed on" in increased prices)—is provided by the debate about automobile prices and wages which was referred to earlier. The UAW had asked the automobile corporations to reduce the prices of their 1958 automobiles to $100 below the 1957 prices, in return for a promise to take this into consideration when presenting their 1958 demands for wage increases. In rejecting this proposal the largest of the corporations put forward a counter-suggestion which must clearly be considered as an extreme position, leaving some room for retreat (i.e. for conceding bigger increases in wages) in the forthcoming negotiations. This "unrealistically extreme" proposal, made (it must be remembered) in the course of a debate in which everyone was deeply concerned with the dangers of inflation, included the continuation of the present contract which calls for a regular wage increase of 2½ per cent per annum (apart from a cost of living adjustment). This is more than the average increase in output per head in the American economy, so that there is a significant piece of sellers' inflation right at the lower end of the range subject to negotiation. In such an atmosphere it would require a quite severe depression to change people's notions of what is the proper development of wage rates and of the corresponding prices (since the right of wages to increase goes together with the right of profits at least not to fall). It would take perhaps an even more severe level of

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unemployment to destroy the power, or remove the inclination, of labor to *force* wage increases on reluctant employers who grant increases only when they feel that they are obliged to—i.e. that they would lose more from strikes than by agreeing to higher wages (and passing them on).

A policy of relatively high employment seems to have won a firm place in the country's economic policy, not only for social and international political reasons, but because neither political party can afford the blame for even a mild depression. With such a set-up there is no need to worry whether the cure is worse than the disease—whether the depression would be more harmful than the inflation that it would prevent. This cure is not one that any government would apply, or even seriously attempt to apply.

It has been suggested that even if the authorities are not really prepared to bring about the degree of depression necessary to negate the pressure of sellers' inflation, they could still do the trick by solemnly announcing a policy of refusing to provide the increase in expenditure called for by a continuing sellers' inflation. The threatened unemployment would then sober the sellers into calling off their inflationary wage and price increases. It seems pretty certain, however, that such a declaration would not be believed and that the bluff would quickly be called. Even if it were believed as regards the economy as a whole, that would not prevent any specific wages or prices from being raised while local conditions still permitted this. It would perhaps even aggravate the wage and price increases, as each tried to get his increase quickly while the local going was still good.

All this brings us to the perhaps only too obvious conclusion that sellers' inflation cannot be cured or prevented by measures directed against excess demand by *buyers*. It can be successfully treated only by attacking the pressure on prices by *sellers*.

THE present debate in the automobile industry indicates where the solution may be found. Workers feel that if they exercise restraint in their wage demands this would only increase the residual going to profits, while employers feel that if they should lower the price they charge for the product, wages would not be reduced proportionately; so that, instead of a general benefit from the avoidance of inflation, with everybody gaining and nobody losing, there would be an unjustified or even an intolerable transference from profits to wages.

This was admirably brought out by the Ford Company which, in its reply to the UAW, turned the UAW proposal completely around and proposed, with more sarcasm than seriousness, that "if you will accept an immediate reduction in wages to the level prevailing at the introduction of our 1957 models, we will take this into consideration in determining how much we will increase prices in our 1958 models." In effect each side says, "You take the first step and trust me to play fair and do my part too." Such invitations are as futile as proposals for unilateral disarmament in another field—and for the same reason: neither party trusts the other not to exploit the opportunity offered to it. Agreement can be reached, if at all, only if there is a clear definition of what is to be done by *both* parties, and if neither party loses, but both gain from a fair arrangement.

In the negotiations that take place between employers and labor, agreements are reached which are both clearly defined and mutually agreeable. But in the course of reaching such agreements, the objective we are concerned with here—the avoidance of inflation—is lost. Both sides recognize that everybody would be better off if inflationary increases in all wages and in all profits were avoided. Real wages and real profits would not be lower but rather higher, to the degree that the economy was saved from inflationary damage. But each party tries to increase or protect its share by asking for more, and not by insisiting on less for others. Each party is, furthermore, represented by negotiators who have to show they are earning their keep by pressing as hard as possible to increase their party's share, so that

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there is a balance of upward pressure on the prices demanded. The result is sellers' inflation.

This does not happen in a perfectly competitive market, because under such conditions there are not present the institutions and attitudes that give sellers the power to push prices up. In a perfectly competitive market, all that is needed for price stability is a monetary and fiscal policy that keeps buyers' demand from becoming either excessive or deficient. No one holds back any product from the market—or can establish a price which results in some of the potential product or the available labor not being taken off the market, so that unless there is excess buyers' demand, prices cannot rise, and if there is a deficient buyers' demand, prices must fall. Unless there is full utilization of resources we cannot have inflation, and if there is a depression (or recession) we will have *deflation* (i.e. *falling* prices).

Thus in a perfectly competitive economy we cannot have inflation and depression at the same time. But where prices are administered by the decrees of large firms, and wages are administered by joint decrees of powerful unions together with powerful employers or employer groups, the situation is different. Sellers' inflation is a by-product of the process, and together with sellers' inflation we can also have depression—indeed we *will* have depression if the authorities try to cure inflation by reducing ("excess") demand.

These by-products of administered wages and prices have important similarities to, and are no less socially harmful than, the monopolistic exploitation that would result from the administration of excessive prices by public utilities. We have gone a long way toward eliminating the latter evil by the *regulation* of prices that may be set by public utilities for the services they supply. The same kind of device can be used to eliminate other evils. Just as public utility prices can be, and are being, regulated so as to prevent monopolistic exploitation, so administered prices and wages can and should be regulated so as to prevent sellers' inflation and the depression which it may bring with it.

THE regulation of administered prices and wages so as to prevent sellers' inflation would have to follow somewhat different lines. It would not be directly concerned as to whether there is more or less than a "fair" rate of return on investments. That would be left to the strong competitive forces which still prevail in our economy. Nor would any regulations be involved other than *price* regulations. The function of the regulation here proposed would be to prevent *restrictive* prices or wages from being administered. A restrictive price is one that results in the demand for a product falling below capacity output. A restrictive wage is one that results in less than full employment in the specific labor market to which it applies. With a monetary and fiscal policy concentrating on the maintenance of adequate buyers' demand for full employment at a constant price level, while preventing buyers' inflation, it would be possible for wages per hour to rise on the average at the same rate as productivity per hour, with aggregate profits rising too at the same pace as aggregate wages and aggregate output (except that increases in the degree of competition, which might be induced, could reduce the share going to profits and increase the share going to labor).

The regulatory body would therefore have to follow a set of rules which would do the following things:

1. They would permit an administered price increase only when production and sales are at capacity. Such price increases should not be withheld on account of profits being high.

2. They would enforce decreases in administered prices whenever production and sales are significantly below capacity. A price decrease should not be waived on account of profits being low, or even negative on this item in the firm's output, as long as the price more than covers current operating costs (more strictly short-period marginal costs).

3. They would permit increases in administered wages, in general at a rate equal to

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the average trend of increase in national productivity.

4. They would permit increases in administered wages greater than this wherever the labor market is tight—with, say, less than half the national average rate of unemployment.

5. They would permit only smaller increases in administered wages, or no increases at all, where the labor market is slack—with, say, more than twice the national avererage rate of unemployment. (The expected continuing increase in product per head makes it possible to avoid reductions in money wages, although it is unavoidable, for price stability, that some prices must fall if others rise.)

This is of course not a fully worked-out solution ready for immediate application. Much remains to be developed—such as generally acceptable criteria of the capacity of different firms and industries, and generally acceptable measures of slackness or tightness in particular labor markets. Measures must also be considered for dealing with possible attempts by monopolistic industries to restrict the installation of capacity if they are prevented from restricting the utilization of existing capacity. (This would bring out the existence of a specific monopoly situation that calls for treatment quite apart from the problem of inflation.) The intensification of competition which the regulation would enforce would also in some instances lead to the elimination of high-cost competitors. While the public would benefit from the increased efficiency of the economy—in higher wages and lower prices—such elimination of competition would conflict with certain existing so-called anti-trust policies that have become in effect anti-competition policies and need to be reconsidered.

The prohibition of price or wage increases could take the form of taxing such unauthorized price or wage increases at very high rates, while the stabilization of administered prices at the approved levels could be facilitated by government purchases and sales at these prices, using the device of "counter-speculation" to prevent monopolistic influences on price from causing inflation and unemployment, just as it can be used to prevent monopolistic influences on price from interfering with the optimum allocation of resources by the competitive market.

There remain important problems of organization and administration of the regulatory body, as well as the need for widespread and intensive public discussion to bring about the kind of understanding of the proposed regulation which is essential for its effective operation in a democracy. And in the course of such examination and debate, important developments, changes, and improvements are to be expected. Nevertheless the general solution here indicated seems to be required if sellers' inflation is to be attacked at its roots.

It is to be expected that one of the most effective debating points against this proposal will be the charge that it means *price control,* against which there are a thousand cogent arguments, as well as a powerful popular appeal. I would like to go on record as an opponent of price control myself, but price *regulation* is not price *control.* The latter consists of an attempt by authority to establish a price below that which clears the market, i.e, a price so low that the amount available is insufficient to satisfy fully the demand of all the would-be buyers. At the controlled price there is therefore *excess demand.* Buyers try to buy more than is available for them to buy. This results in disorganized supply, waiting in line, tyranny of sellers over housewives and other buyers, selling under the counter, gray markets and black markets, evasion of and disrespect for the law, corruption and gangsterism, and finally, as a lesser evil, the installation of rationing, with all its administrative burden, economic inefficiency, and public inconvenience.

Price regulation does *not* attempt to set a price below that which clears the market. It only prevents the public utility, or whoever else determines an administered price or wage, from setting it *above* the level that would clear the market at the optimum output. In fact, in the case of public utilities the price regulation results in greater output at lower prices and a more efficient use of the

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resources of the economy. The owners of the public utility are indeed deprived of their opportunity to make monopoly profits, but that is more than offset by the consideration that the monopoly profit could have been obtained (in the absence of price regulation) only at the expense of a loss to the consumers much greater than the gain to the monopolists. Since there is no attempt to set the price below the level that would clear the market, everybody can buy as much as he wants to of the product—railway travel, electric current, or whatnot—and none of the evils of price control comes into the picture.

Price regulation is more properly seen as the *opposite* of price control. The function of a price is to clear the market. Price control is bad because it interferes with this function by attempting to establish a different and lower price which *does not* clear the market. Price regulation restores the function of price by adjusting the price so that it *does* clear the market at the optimum output. *It interferes only with interferences,* preventing the monopolists from fixing a price *above* that which would clear the market at the potential supply, which is the socially most desirable supply.

In the case of the proposed regulation of administered prices and wages, the suggested rules are specifically such as would always maintain prices and wages which would clear the market at full employment with price stability. Nowhere would this result in a price or wage below that which would clear the market, so that the cry of "price control" would be no more justifiable than if raised against the established policy of regulating the price of water supply or telephone service—perhaps even less justifiable, since regulation of the prices charged by public utilities does prevent these from obtaining monopolistic gains, while the proposed regulation of wages and prices would only prevent the inflation from which practically nobody gains.

The full utilization of existing capacity may sometimes lead to inadequate profits, or even to losses, but that is the nature of the competitive profit *and loss* system. It shows that an error was made in the past in producing too much capacity in the industry, but that is no reason for society's compounding the error by refusing to make use of the capacity once it has been produced. The low profits or the losses are then performing their proper function of discouraging further investment in such industries. In other cases the prices that clear the market at full capacity output will yield very large profits. These large profits are then performing their proper function of encouraging more investment in such industries (unless there is a monopolistic restriction on such investment, which would call for anti-monopoly action or price regulation in the corresponding investment industries).

Just as low profits form no excuse for monopolistic restriction of output, so the high profits are no excuse for enforcing price reductions below the level which clears the market. This *would* be price control and is to be equally condemned whether it is imposed by government or whether it is due to "restraint" on the part of producers who are powerful enough, and rich enough, to be able to do this. If the existence of excess capacity in steel and in automobiles means that current prices are set too high, the emergence of gray and black market prices during and after World War II meant that prices were then too low. The generosity of the corporations at that time in selling too cheap (in part to privileged suppliers of the black market) is no justification for selling too dear now. A genuine defense of the free market system is not affected by the emergence of either profits or losses.

Another objection I would like to anticipate is that the regulation of administered prices and wages, so as to prevent sellers' inflation, is in conflict with the traditions of free competitive capitalism. It is possible that the trade unions would easily see all the social benefits to be gained from keeping the prices of products down to the level needed for capacity production and full employment, but would denounce the regulation of wages as an intolerable interference with the fun-

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damental right of collective bargaining. It is possible that employers would quickly appreciate the desirability of curbing excessive wage demands, but would reject the regulation of prices as an alien and unthinkable interference with the free economy and an impious infringement of the sacred rights of management in setting prices.

Such responses would indicate that "after you Alphonse" really means "include me out," or "let George do it," and we will not have the cooperation that is necessary. The true interests of labor are not damaged by the trade unions relinquishing the right to institute inflation, or even by their giving up the right to use inflation as an instrument for attempting to increase real wages at the expense of profits. The true interests of capital are not betrayed by surrendering the parallel right to start (or keep feeding) a sellers' inflation by restricting output below capacity so as to raise prices (or by raising prices where this has the effect of restricting demand and output below capacity).

The justification of the free economy and its institutions rests ultimately on its efficiency in satisfying the needs and desires of a free people. The price mechanism is the central instrument for approaching such optimum output, and it does this only to the extent that the prices (including wages) are those that clear the market, while corresponding to the value of the alternative products that have to be sacrificed (at the margin) in order to produce the current output of any commodity or service. Monopolistic restriction of output causes resources to be shifted from the production of more useful to the production of less useful goods and services. The regulation of public utility prices is justifiable because it works in the desirable direction of correcting this distortion. Inflation damages the economy as a whole. The restriction of output that results from attempts to curb sellers' inflation by reducing buyers' expenditures is more damaging than monopolistic restriction. The latter shifts resources from useful products to less useful products, while the former shifts resources from the production of useful products to producing nothing at all—except the human frustrations and suffering from unemployment. The regulation of prices and wages that is necessary to prevent sellers' inflation is therefore more important than the regulation of naturally monopolistic public utilities, and no more repugnant to the basic principles of the free society.

In this spirit the proposals here made will be seen not as infringing the principles of the competitive profit and loss system, but as protecting this system from the power of sellers to raise prices and wages above the levels compatible with full employment and price stability. He is not a true friend of the free society who defends these flaws that permit inflation and unemployment to persist.

It has been very fashionable for some time to deplore inflation and to quote Lenin's declaration that inflation is the Achilles heel or the Trojan Horse of capitalism. Recently it has become even more fashionable to *preach* restraint, as a remedy for inflation, to parties who are unable to respond, even if willing, because they have no assurance that the others will play their part. The most recent statements by Labor and Management in the automobile industry include public declarations of conversion to a readiness to exercise the restraint, provided the other parties cooperate. The time has come to wind up the deploring, the quoting, the preaching, and the declaration of conversion, and instead, by regulating administered prices and wages, to *provide* the restraint needed to protect the free economy from sellers' inflation.

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THE LIONS OF THE ALHAMBRA

Jews in Moorish Spain

FREDERICK P. BARGEBUHR

MEDIEVAL Jewry in general resigned from the cultural and even more so the political ambitions entertained by the Moslems and Christians. The involvement of a Jewish intelligentsia—who observed their religion most devoutly—in the secular activities of Islamic Spain between the 9th and 11th centuries is, therefore, surprising. There had been nothing in Jewish history quite like it since the Hellenistic period. Indeed, Jewish participation in and competition with Moorish culture in Spain went even further than has generally been thought. I have recently been able to prove that the earliest parts of the Alhambra in Granada, Spain's most famous castle, are largely remnants of a palace built by the Jewish vizier Yehoseph ibn Nagralla as an expression of the quasi-messianic ambitions he had inherited from his father, the famous statesman, poet, and Talmudist, Samuel ha-Nagid. Implied in this discovery is an extremely intimate relation between emancipated Spanish Jews and the courtly culture of the Ummayyad caliphs of Cordova who ruled Spain from the 8th through the early 11th centuries. These developments may illustrate some aspects of Ahad Ha-am's distinction between Jewish "creative competition" and "destructive assimilation" or "imitation."

Though the Ummayyads were related by blood to Mohammed, they had originally (in Mecca) opposed the new religion preached by the Prophet. With the subsequent conquests of Islam, however, and the foundation of an Islamic empire stretching from South Arabia to Southern France and East Iran (a situation that offered opportunities for power and wealth to the family of the Prophet) the Ummayyads gave up their opposition, establishing themselves as caliphs first in Damascus and later in Cordova. Their conversion to Islam seems to have been more political than religious—they never capitulated to the ascetic ethic of the Moslem creed—and their worldliness was reflected in the opulence of their royal courts, which attracted poets, philosophers, artists, and architects. While in Damascus, the Ummayyad caliphs made ample use of what was left of Greco-Roman and Persian art in the Near East to achieve a splendor to vie with Baghdad which was then ruled by the Abbasid caliphs (of the *Arabian Nights*). The extent of the Ummayyads' emancipation from orthodox Moslem tenets can be appreciated from the recently unearthed ruins of al-Mafjar, one of their "desert palaces" near Jericho. The lantern tower and façade of this Grand Trianon were found to be decorated with life-size statues of scantily clad boys and girls, and even a representation of the caliph himself—a flagrant violation of Islam's injunction against graven images.

In Cordova—to which they moved in the wake of the Arab conquest of Spain—the Ummayyads went even further in cultural license than in their Syrian days. In their courtly life, they imitated the ostentatious ceremonial of the Roman emperors; using Byzantine methods, they also built a strong civil and military administration which was

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nevertheless extremely flexible. Similarly, they brought about their own synthesis of the Islamic art of Baghdad and Damascus with newly imported Byzantine and Persian forms and techniques such as the mosaic. (In spite of religious prohibition, the Ummayyads brought in plastic art from Byzantium, where it seems to have been put up for auction during the Empire's iconoclastic period.) The novel composite style of Cordova's Great Mosque (itself inspired by the Roman aqueducts with their multiple arcs) later became an important influence in shaping both the Romanesque and Gothic architecture of Christian Northwest Europe.

AMONG those who had facilitated the Arab conquest of Spain were the Jews. Increasingly oppressed by the Visigoth rulers of the Hispanic peninsula, the Jewish population had welcomed the Arabs as liberators. In turn, the Arabs extended marked toleration to their Jewish subjects, finding them not only loyal but even useful as interpreters of European ideas. Eventually Jews came to be employed in the highest offices of the state. In the 10th century, for example, the Jew Hasdai ibn Shaprut was the principal statesman at the court of the Ummayyads. In Jewish history he is especially remembered for his negotiations with the Khazar czardom between the lower Volga and the Black and Caspian Seas, which had been newly converted to Judaism. This conversion of an entire kingdom was welcomed by the Jews as a divine confirmation of their hopes and must certainly have stimulated their return to a more active role in history.

Two hundred years of living under the wing of the Ummayyads had an emancipating effect on the Jews. The Islamic monotheistic creed, derived indirectly from Judaism, did not strike the Jews as a step forward, nor did the ethics of the Koran appear superior to the ideals of the Hebrew prophets. But the Ummayyad court of Cordova, in many respects liberated from normative Islam and consequently open to multifarious interests, drew the Jews on into a similar widening of horizons. By the 10th and 11th centuries, the culturally mature Jewish circles of Cordova combined the Ummayyads' courtly elegance and interest in the arts with a vastly enlarged concern for the intellectual possibilities of their own tradition. They carried on the Rabbinic traditions of Biblical and Talmudic studies at magnificent academies while at the same time venturing into new fields of intellectual endeavor. The formal study of Hebrew linguistics was promoted among the Cordovan Jews, and systematic theology and philosophy (both Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic) became an important pursuit. Moreover, although the Cordovan Jews spoke Arabic and Spanish in their daily life, they dared to use the Hebrew of the synagogue and the scholars in lyric poetry that had the forms and rhythms—and, in many cases, the content—of secular Arabic verse. The writing of Hebrew poetry about love and nature could not be justified by the example of Solomon's Song—which was interpreted allegorically as a dialogue between God and Israel; nevertheless, with its distinctly secular and erotic surface, its language lent itself to these themes. Hebrew drinking songs followed more directly the Arabic pattern. Apart from poetry, linguistics, philosophy, and theology, the Cordovan Jews showed great interest in science, in mathematics and astronomy especially, and—as we shall see—architecture and plastic art. But the important fact to notice about this flourishing of creative activity is that it represented not "assimilation" to the world of Islam but a fundamentally Jewish response to the challenge of Arabic culture. Through their new poetry and philosophy, the Jews, though in exile, could uphold their national pride and express their unique individuality.

Later—after the caliphate was overthrown by Berber and Slav mercenaries—Cordovan Jews carried the spark of Ummayyad humanistic liberalism to other Spanish towns. Ibn Gabirol and others introduced a breath of cultural life into Saragossa, and Maimonides brought the Cordovan spirit to the enenlightened Egyptian court of Saladin as late as the end of the 12th century. But the

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most important apostle of the Cordovan idea was Samuel ibn Nagralla (922-1056), called by his fellow Jews *ha-Nagid*, the Prince.

Born in Cordova, Samuel left the city when it was sacked by the Berbers in 1012; eventually he made his way to Granada, where he was accepted into the service of the reigning Berber prince Habbus. Lacking loyal citizens among Arabs and Christians, and fearing rivalries among his own Berber ranks, Habbus was glad to employ Samuel in the financial administration of the kingdom. The Jew, belonging to no party, could be trusted, and Habbus—among his illiterate and ferocious Berber soldiery—must have been happy to find a man trained in administration and one who could enhance his royal dignity by writing diplomatic letters that vied in elegance with those of the most civilized courts. Gradually Samuel seems to have made Habbus's successor, Badis, dependent on his administrative manipulations. Also Samuel successfully led the armies of Granada for more than ten years in warfare against the rulers of hostile neighbor cities like Almeria and Seville. These battles are described by Samuel in Hebrew odes which are still extant.

Samuel used his major-domoship to rebuild a "new Cordova" of Jewish culture in the hitherto insignificant country town of Granada, and, astonishingly enough, the barbaric Berber king permitted him to do so. Celebrated poets and scholars, among them ibn Gabirol, were invited by Samuel to become members of his academy and to educate his son Yehoseph. Since Samuel was himself an ambitious litterateur, he personally presided over this academy. It seems that ibn Gabirol, for whom he was no match as a poet, once dared to criticize one of Samuel's "icy" over-intellectual poems, and was soon driven out of the major-domo's "countenance." In odes of proud self-justification and poems of love to Samuel's prodigious son Yehoseph, ibn Gabirol attempted reconciliation, but the vizier would brook no challenge to his absolute authority, and apparently remained adamant.

It does not surprise us that, in these triumphant circumstances, Samuel should have seen himself in a kind of latter-day role. But Samuel's messianic dreams, as we are able to reconstruct them speculatively, were not strictly of the traditional "orthodox" kind. Tinged with Cordovan secularism, they involved visions of an independent Jewish kingdom, probably within the kingdom of Granada itself, to be a center not only of Rabbinic study but of power and riches, the fine arts and philosophy. Samuel seems to have felt himself equal to—indeed, at times, to have identified himself with—King Solomon, who was to the medieval mind the epitome of the ideal ruler.

As the master of a royal harem (I Kings 2), as the gallant friend of the Queen of Sheba, and as the presumed author of the Song of Songs, Solomon remained the model for sensuality and courtliness. Moreover, the molten images of "oxen" and lions with which, in apparent defiance of the Second Commandment, he adorned his palace and Temple, and the secular wisdom of the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (both of which were ascribed to his authorship), all helped to create an impression of Solomon as an ingenious but skeptical hedonist. In this character he became the hero of countless medieval legends told by Jew, by Christian, and especially by Moslem throughout the Middle Ages.

But it was also Solomon the magician and great builder who stirred the imagination of medieval rulers. His architectural accomplishments were imitated both in Christian Byzantium by as early an emperor as Justinian (who in the 6th century erected the Hagia Sophia Church with the avowed purpose of outbuilding Solomon) and within Islam by the Cordovan Ummayyads who—following the fantastic descriptions of Solomon's legendary palaces—built palaces of their own in which the floors were of shining or transparent materials decorated with sea symbols so as to resemble lakes, and in which the interiors of the domes were fitted with cunningly lit surfaces that created an illusion of dripping water or of a rotating firma-

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ment—to suggest the aerial or submarine palace of the Solomon legends.

It was in the spirit of this latter-day conception of Solomon that Samuel raised his son Yehoseph (the name is a Hebrew archaism typical of the father's method of grammatical reconstructions) who succeeded him as vizier under Badis. Yehoseph was educated to fulfill Samuel's exorbitant political and cultural ambitions.

King Badis turned, in the later part of his life, into an alcoholic, neglecting the affairs of state and virtually leaving all decisions to Yehoseph. The king lived in the Albaicin Castle opposite the Alhambra hill, high above Granada. The Alhambra (Arabic for "The Red Castle") was the site of some old fortifications, and here Yehoseph built his own—Solomonic—palace. This fact is expressly stated in the memoirs of the last Berber King of Granada, Badis's grandson Abdallah. Such a construction gave Yehoseph the opportunity for Solomonic display.

The Talmud forbids a direct imitation of the Temple or any of its adornments; nevertheless Yehoseph used modified versions of the Solomonic symbols for his profane palace. One of Yehoseph's halls displayed a dome encrusted with gems and played on by changing lights, so as to give the illusion of rotating: this was Solomon's Palanquin (mentioned in the Song of Songs 3:9-10: "King Solomon made himself a palanquin of the wood of Lebanon, he made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering thereof of purple"). The courts were covered with roses of Sharon and other flora of the Song of Songs. And there was even a "sea," a fountain, as in Solomon's Temple, but it was supported by twelve lions instead of the twelve "oxen" of the original (I Kings 7:23-25). We owe this information and various other details to a hitherto overlooked poem by ibn Gabirol which must be, for many reasons, a description of Yehoseph's palace:

The dome is like the Palanquin of Solomon
hanging above the rooms' splendors. . . .
And there is a full Sea, matching Solomon's
Sea, yet resting on no oxen;
But there are lions in phalanx on its rim,
seeming to roar for prey—these whelps,
Whose bosoms are like wells that gush
spurts up from their mouths like
streams. . . .

The evidence by which I have been able to establish that this palace was the oldest Alhambra castle itself is too detailed to set forth here, but my conclusion was first suggested by a consideration of ibn Gabirol's poem in the light of an overlooked passage in the aforementioned memoirs of Abdallah. These memoirs were written after Abdallah had been exiled to Morocco, and they contain a vivid description of the powerful ambitions of Samuel and Yehoseph. Abdallah credits Samuel ibn Nagralla with good service to his grandfather Badis and great-grandfather Habbus, but he accuses Yehoseph ibn Nagralla of having murdered Badis's son, the heir to the throne (Abdallah's own father), and of having plotted against Badis with the ruler of the neighboring town Almeria. One example of Yehoseph's overweening arrogance, writes Abdallah, was the fact that he dared build for himself an Alhambra castle which was, Abdallah implies, more beautiful than the royal palace of his grandfather (on the Albaicin hill in Granada).

The principal extant monument of Yehoseph ibn Nagralla's palace among the present Alhambra structures is the Fount of Lions (the original basin of which seems to be preserved in the Abencerrages hall). Apart from this, much of the castle's foundation and masonry, the plan of large sections, and, most important, the architectural spirit of the palace as a whole, must be placed in the 11th century and credited to the Cordovan Jews of the Nagralla circle.

The Alhambra was one of the most ambitious architectural projects in the history of exiled Jewry. A modern scholar, aware of the Talmudic prohibitions, is shocked at the liberties these "orthodox" Cordovan Jews took by using Solomonic motifs in the erec-

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tion of a profane palace. In particular, the plastic art of the Alhambra seems to be a flagrant contravention of the Second Commandment. But ibn Gabirol in his poem praises the palace jubilantly; one surmises that at moments the resurrection of a Jewish kingdom in Granada must have appeared imminent, and the license taken in the building of the palace can perhaps be explained as an aspect of the exaltation which the Cordovan circle experienced when their triumph seemed to herald the millennium.

Such presumption provoked the revenge of Nemesis, and bigotry was her weapon. The tolerance of the Ummayyad days had vanished with the downfall of the caliphate, and now the Almoravides—those fanatic African hordes, introduced into Spain as mercenaries by the frightened Moslems to fight the Christians—crusaded against the latter but also against the liberalism and secular culture of the Moslems themselves. For these uncouth fanatics it was also a crime to allow a Jew to occupy a high position. The riches amassed by the Jews of Granada were a tempting prey. Personal enemies of the Nagralla family had been pamphleteering against Yehoseph for some time. In an invective directed against the rich Jews of Granada, against their complete domination of the town, and against their *Nagid,* Yehoseph (and his palace), one poet wrote:

They divided up Granada, capital and
provinces
and everywhere is one of those accursed
ones;
They seized Granada's revenues . . .
That ape of theirs has his mansion faced
with stone
and makes the purest springs flow thither.

Incited by such polemics, a mob stormed the king's palace, where Yehoseph had fled for protection. Rumors had been spread to the effect that Yehoseph had killed Badis and invited the armies of the King of Almeria to invade Granada in order to establish him as ruler. Even when Yehoseph led the king out alive onto a balcony, the masses would not disperse; he, together with a large number of the Jewish community of Granada, was killed during the riots of that day.

THE Nagrallas came too early. For the majority of the Spanish Jews of this period, the idea of a cultural secularization and self-emancipation from certain religious restrictions against art had no appeal. And for the Jewish nation as a whole, waiting throughout the Middle Ages with passive yet passionate expectation for the Messiah to deliver them from exile, the idea of self-redemption through political and cultural action did not come for another nine hundred years. As the Middle Ages wore on, and as conditions in Western Christendom became more and more unfavorable to Jewish participation in the life around them, Jewish life itself inevitably turned inward and parochial. Concomitantly, the notion that an involvement in secular culture must necessarily constitute a betrayal of Judaism took strong hold on the Jews of Europe. Today, however, the secularist achievements of the Nagrallas seem one of the few examples in the history of the Jewish diaspora (the Hellenistic period being another) of the way in which Jews could observe their religion fully without withdrawing from general culture—a case of "assimilation" that was not destructive of Judaism but a means of enriching Jewish culture.

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AMERICA'S NEW CULTURE HERO

Feelings Without Words

ROBERT BRUSTEIN

IN THE last eight or ten years Americans have been charmed by a new culture hero, with far-reaching effects upon the quality of our spoken arts. In a persistent effort to find a voice for America, to find a language, vocabulary, and intonation peculiarly our own, we have come temporarily to settle for no voice at all. The stage, motion pictures, television, and even popular music are now exalting an inarticulate hero, who—for all the dependence of these media on language—cannot talk.

Of medium height and usually of lower-class birth, his most familiar physical characteristic is his surly and discontented expression. His eyes peer out at the world from under beetling brows; his uncombed hair falls carelessly over his forehead; his right hand rests casually on his right hip. He is extremely muscular and walks with a slouching, shuffling gait. He scratches himself often, slumps in chairs, and almost never smiles. He is also identified by the sounds which issue from his mouth. He squeezes, he grunts, he passes his hand over his eyes and forehead, he stares steadily, he turns away, he scratches, then again faces his adversary, and finally speaks. What he says is rarely important but he has mesmerized his auditor by the effort he takes to say it. He has communicated not information but feeling; he has revealed an inner life of unspecified anguish and torment.

From this description it should be clear that I am talking about a character familiar not through any particular work of art but rather through association with the many actors who impersonate it—Marlon Brando, James Dean, Paul Newman, Ben Gazzara, John Cassavetes, Montgomery Clift, and the countless others whose identification with sex, violence, and incoherency unites them as a school. What endears this peculiar creature to the general public? Where does he come from, what is his significance, and what has been his effect on present-day dramatic writing?

The inarticulate hero of today clearly finds his immediate origin in Tennessee Williams' Stanley Kowalski as interpreted by Marlon Brando. His tradition, however, goes further back than *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Ever since Eugene O'Neill created Yank in *The Hairy Ape* (1922), American playwrights have been trying to find dramatic expression for the man of lower birth—of Northern urban or Southern rural origin—who was denied the language and manners of his more cultured countrymen. Quite often, in spite of superior physical strength, this man was pictured as a victim. O'Neill's stoker Yank has the power to make the ship go, but once on land, in the clutch of the cold concrete city, he is overcome by pushing crowds, political complexity, and the ridicule of a high-born woman, and finally is crushed to death while trying to embrace an ape, the only animal with whom he finds intellectual communion. The sharecroppers, migrant workers, and tramps of John Steinbeck are victims too, but since his heroes are more unqualifiedly noble than Yank (for Steinbeck virtue and poverty are almost always equated) their defeat is political rather than personal and implies an indict-

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ment of society. In the early works of Clifford Odets, the political note is struck even harder. O'Neill's and Steinbeck's proletarian heroes are often characterized by their lack of verbal coherence, but Odets's heroes are singular for their extreme verbosity. Rather than being speechless in the face of their dilemma, they never stop talking about it.

The unspoken assumption of the Group Theatre, the repertory company that produced most of the proletarian dramas of the 30's, was that sensitivity, fire, intensity, and sexual potency were primarily the properties of the underprivileged and the uneducated. Using the acting techniques of Stanislavsky in forms altered to suit American needs, the Group Theatre created a style with which to impart the supercharged mood of these plays and an acting company to impersonate the underprivileged heroes. The most representative actors in this company, John Garfield and Luther Adler, rather than being stammerers, were highly articulate; rather than being enmeshed in a world too complex for their intelligence, they were extremely precise about the forces leading them to ruin.

The Group Theatre was dissolved in the early 40's, but some of its functions were taken over by the Actors Studio, organized in the late 40's by former members. Unlike the Group Theatre, the Actors Studio was designed not as a production unit but primarily as a workshop where actors could perfect their craft. And yet, because of the widely publicized popular success of some of its members, the Actors Studio has managed to wield more influence on acting styles and playwrighting material than any other single organization, even those dedicated to the actual production of plays. It is in the Actors Studio that most of today's proletarian heroes are being spawned.

ALTHOUGH much (if not all) of the acting that emerges from the Actors Studio would seem to indicate that the proletarian is still considered more interesting, more electric, and capable of deeper feelings than the owner of a store or the manager of a bank, this assumption seems no longer accompanied by a political conviction. The proletarian hero of the 50's has lost his political flavor and, even more important, his power of speech. He combines the inarticulacy of the Hairy Ape with the dynamism (now adjusted from a boil to a simmer) of the Odets hero, and adds to these certain qualities which neither Odets nor O'Neill had endowed him with. Stanley Kowalski is the first character in American drama to unite most of the identifying characteristics of this hero, but it is difficult to determine how much actor Marlon Brando and director Elia Kazan, both Actors Studio associates at the time or soon after, contributed to his formation. All drama is a collaboration, and dramatists find their characters subtly changing coloration in the playing. Stanley Kowalski, as he became known to the general public in the original New York production and the excellent movie made from it, was probably the collaborative product of Williams, Brando, and Kazan. Stanley, as *written* by Williams, is a highly complex and ambiguous character, one who can be taken either as hero or as villain. As a social or cultural figure, Stanley is a villain, in mindless opposition to civilization and culture—the "new man" of the modern world whom Williams seems to find responsible for the present-day decline in art, language, decorum, and culture. As a psychological or sexual figure, however, Stanley exists on a somewhat more heroic moral plane. He is akin to those silent, sullen gamekeepers and grooms of D. H. Lawrence (an early influence on Williams) whose sexuality, though violent, is unmental, unspiritual, and, therefore, in some way free from taint. The conflict between Blanche and Stanley allegorizes the struggle between effeminate culture and masculine libido. It is no accident that Stanley, in the climax of the play, subdues Blanche by a brutal sexual assault. One assumption of the play is plain: culture and tradition are desirable, but breed effeteness and perversity (Blanche is a nymphomaniac) and make one an easy prey to the unenlightened.

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It should be clear, even from this brief analysis, that with Stanley, Williams wrought significant changes in the proletarian hero. If one sympathizes with Stanley it is not because he is underprivileged or exploited or victimized—Stanley is at all times an active character, one who manipulates each situation in which he appears. Rather than expressing dissatisfaction with the grubby conditions in which he lives, he exults in them, and he does not indicate any desire to better himself. More important, Stanley, as brute force incarnate, has no poetry or sensitivity or nobility in him—neither John Garfield nor Luther Adler could ever have played this role. His intelligence is mostly animal cunning and his power of speech limited to expressing basic desires.

And yet, if Williams created an ignoble rather than a noble savage, how do we explain the spectacular success of Brando and the extensive influence his playing of Stanley has had on acting ever since? The answer, I think, lies in the personal values Brando contributed to the role. As played by Brando, Stanley Kowalski somehow emerged as a more appealing, a more sympathetic, and (most important) a more sensitive character than Williams created, and the play became a conflict between two protagonists, one less noble but no less interesting than the other. When Anthony Quinn, taking over the part, played it more like the thick-headed antagonist Williams intended, the focus of the play shifted back to Blanche. There is irony in the fact that, although *Streetcar* is Blanche's tragedy, the villain of the piece became the prototype for a hero, the inarticulate hero of popular culture. After Stanley, the brutal proletarian was rarely to be seen again. As he emerged from the Actors Studio and the pens of the writers who began creating parts for these actors, he had once again acquired a helpless attitude in a hostile world. And although he inherited Stanley Kowalski's speechlessness, his animality, and his violent behavior, these qualities were now seen as marks of profundity of character.

Thus in a period of prosperity and political conformity, the proletarian hero has managed, paradoxically, to accomplish something he failed to do in a period of depression and political radicalism—he has made the audience take notice of him. At a time when America has the largest middle-class population in the world (when, in one sense, it sees itself as entirely middle class), one of its most conspicuous dramatic heroes is poor and uneducated. Although the Broadway audience is predominantly from the cultured, leisured classes, the typical Broadway product (not imported from England or Europe) is peopled with dock workers, drug addicts, juvenile delinquents, prostitutes, pimps, butchers, Southern farmers, seamen, machine shop workers, and drifters. By finding "reality" and "truth" (though not necessarily virtue) in the outcasts of society, playwrights have created a problem they did not have to face in the 30's: they have estranged their audience from the difficulties of their heroes. I do not wish to repeat the charges made against realism in the drama; its smallness of vision, its prosaicness, and its pedantic re-creation of the least penetrating aspects of life have become all too apparent. I do want to add, however, that when the drama centers on the proletarian and faithfully records his speech, it often becomes mindless, almost anti-intellectual. Ideas and subtle emotions are communicated primarily through speech and even the bluntest emotion loses its meaning if it is not reflected upon. How empty would be the suffering of Lear or Oedipus were it not followed by an illumination of the heart and the mind. In limiting the expression of their heroes, playwrights have limited their heroes' understanding of their suffering. The difficulties of the modern proletarian hero end on an unresolved question—Why?

That the tongue-tied emotionalism of many modern plays is partly the result of directing and acting techniques is indicated by the fact that even in relatively literate plays, inarticulacy is sometimes imposed by the production. In the recent Broadway showing of *Compulsion*, for example, the

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two actors called upon to play boys of superior mental capacities and wealthy backgrounds brought the same verbal hesitation to their roles they might have used in playing a couple of hoodlums. Broadway apparently has still not devised a technique to communicate intelligence. The paradox of the estranged audience applies to acting as well: although the Broadway audience is relatively coherent and literate, the emphasis on our stage has fallen off the spoken word. The actor uses language only as a secondary instrument. His main purpose is to convey the mute feelings within his soul. The effect is admittedly quite explosive. The struggle within an incoherent individual trying to express his feelings can be extremely powerful, for one often has the sense that the character's stammers, mumbles, and grunts will, like those of Billy Budd, erupt into violence if they continue to frustrate speech. (Much of O'Neill's power as a playwright stems from his inability to say precisely what he means and his tortuous way of talking round and round a subject.) The consequence of this style of acting, however, is that we presently have an actor's theater. The actor has taken precedence over the playwright; the play has receded before the performance. One becomes more conscious of the personal problems of the actor than of the character he is playing; in some cases, the actor's and the character's problems become inextricably confused.

THE general uninterest in the classics demonstrated by many of today's actors and directors (a recent Equity symposium had the title: "The Classics: Are They Avant-Garde?") is closely related to this problem, for most of the classics of dramatic literature depend to a large extent on words. It is significant that one of America's most able theater and movie directors, Elia Kazan, has only directed contemporary works. When asked if he would ever produce Shakespeare, he replied (albeit in all humility), "I never have and I never will. I am interested in the life that is around me. . . ." This is an extraordinary statement, all the more so because so few people in the theater consider it extraordinary. Apart from the intimation that contemporary playwrights probe more deeply into "the life around me" than Shakespeare (or is Kazan concerned only with environmental truth?), these words yield very interesting considerations. Imagine the conductor of the Philharmonic refusing to interpret Mozart and Beethoven on the same grounds. Considering the appalling ignorance most actors have of the works in their field, try to imagine even the most benighted tenor, violinist, or ballerina in a similar state of ignorance. One would look in vain for the same paucity of classical works on the musical, ballet, or operatic stage as one finds on Broadway. In refusing Ibsen, Strindberg, and Yeats a hearing, the interpreters of the drama have usurped the prerogatives of the creative artist, one of whose permissible functions is to be in revolt against the techniques of the past.

Mr. Kazan goes on to express his admiration for Chekhov (the one classical writer known and cherished by most members of the Actors Studio) and this gives us a clue why traditional drama holds no fascination for him. Although Chekhov was a master of language (the language, be it remembered, of the cultured, leisured classes), it is not always the word that communicates his meaning. More often, the action is revealed slowly in fragments of discourse, and seemingly commonplace statements conceal the intense desires and anguish of the characters. Chekhov thus offers relative liberation to the actor and director; he offers a freedom of interpretation not granted by Shakespeare or Shaw. The indirect techniques of Stanislavsky become a possible method of conveying Chekhov's fragments and impressions (although Chekhov complained most of his life that Stanislavsky had misinterpreted his plays) because the sub-text, or the feeling behind the word, has gained more importance than the word itself. In less impressionistic plays than Chekhov's, however, the subtext can be a stratagem by which the actor ignores the playwright's meaning, substituting the *feeling* he himself finds to be

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more compelling. The actor becomes a creator rather than an interpreter, seeking the clue to his performance in his own experience instead of in the experience of the character he is supposed to be playing.*

GRANTED the power of a school of acting and production techniques to impose a special kind of theater on the Broadway audience, is this school's power operative in the movies as well? I think not. Broadway audiences are notoriously pliable and faddist, while the more intransigent mass audiences respond primarily to that which moves or speaks for them. Furthermore, although on Broadway the literate play can be roughed up by the performance, in Hollywood, parts are tailored to fit personalities. What personality did the inarticulate hero assume in the movies? It is obvious that when Brando went to Hollywood he took Stanley Kowalski with him. With very little adjustment, Brando's Stanley became the paraplegic war veteran of *The Men,* the ex-prize fighter-dock worker of *On the Waterfront,* the leather-jacketed delinquent of *The Wild One,* the peasant leader of *Viva Zapata!* and even Antony in the filmed version of *Julius Caesar* (to capitalize on Brando's box office personality, Antony was changed into a sullen, beetle-browed muscle-man). Although the hero maintained, in almost every case, his identification with sexuality and violence, he could no longer be accused of cruelty or brutality.

Was it merely to the magnetism of Brando's personality that the mass audience responded, as they had responded in the past to Clark Gable, Cary Grant, and Gary Cooper? Again, I think not. Brando's personality, as he never tires of telling the press, has little in common with that of the character he plays: one of his first Broadway roles was the sensitive poet Marchbanks in *Candida* and he has lately been attempting roles of a more articulate nature. Furthermore, those actors who have imitated Brando's inarticulate style have achieved almost as much success as he.

I do not think we can escape the conclusion that Brando's spectacular film success rests to a large extent on his being one of the images (he was the original image) of the inarticulate hero. It is, in other words, to the inarticulate hero that the mass audience responds.

The most conspicuous thing about the inarticulate hero as a movie figure is that he is invariably an outcast or a rebel, isolated from friends, from parents, from teachers, from society. This is emphasized by his shabby, careless appearance; in a world of suits and ties, the leather jacket and open collar are symbols of alienation and rebellion. The main character in *On the Waterfront* is, until he is beaten up by labor hoodlums, befriended neither by police nor peers and finds consolation only in homing pigeons. Although the hero of *The Wild One* begins as the leader of a group of cyclists who terrorize a small town, he repudiates his vicious companions and is, in turn, assaulted by the furious townspeople. The young boy (James Dean) of *Rebel Without a Cause* cannot gain acceptance by his adolescent contemporaries nor can he come to terms with his family until he is attacked by a juvenile gang revenging themselves for the death of their leader. The son in *East of Eden* is a pariah, doomed like Cain (with whom he is identified) to be despised by his father and rejected by the town in which he lives. The hero of *Edge of the City,* on the run from the police and alone until befriended by a paternal Negro dock worker, gets involved in a vicious hookfight with a sadistic dockyard foreman. The schoolboy in *Careless Years,* anxious to marry before he is old

*According to studies, a good segment of the movie audience believes that movie stars "make it up as they go along." They have lately, to some extent, been proven right. We are told that a few of the scenes in *On the Waterfront,* for example, were the result of actors' improvisations. On the stage, *A Hatful of Rain* was also created to a large extent by actors' improvisations. The emphasis put on improvisations by the Actors Studio is a sign of the actor's attempt to usurp the playwright's prerogatives. Many lazy and inept playwrights are entirely content to let the actors fill in the outlines of their under-written characters.

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enough, isolates himself from everybody's love and friendship until he is soundly whipped in a fist fight with his father. The oil worker of *Giant* lives alone in a dilapidated shack, building a fortune so that he can revenge himself on the smug and settled families of the area. In *Jailhouse Rock,* the hero spends a year in jail for manslaughter where he learns to play the guitar; upon being released, he becomes rich as a rock-and-roll singer, alienating his closest friends until he is beaten up by his best friend. In each case, although the hero is a rebel against established authority, he is not necessarily identified with the lawless elements of society. He is in the middle, isolated and alone, a victim of forces he cannot understand. Frequently involved with the police, he is often in jail. Society itself is viewed as the outside of a prison, mechanical, forbidding, inhibitive, and repressive; but curiously enough the hero is trying to enter this prison, for it offers warmth and security on the inside. The obstacle is his own rebellion and before he can enter he must get involved in violence, as if in expiation for some sin. Before he can become a member of society, he must first be beaten up. In order to win—to be accepted—he first must lose.

THE pattern of all these films, then, is the same: although the hero starts off on the wrong side, he is almost always converted to righteousness before the end. This is usually accomplished with the aid of his one ally in society, the girl who loves him. The girl (her face is that of Julie Harris, Natalie Wood, Eva Marie Saint, and Elizabeth Taylor, but her character doesn't vary) is frequently an adolescent and invariably virtuous and understanding. Unlike the boy, she speaks coherently (and interminably), attends school regularly, gets good grades, and is accepted from the outset by her family and friends. Most significant, she exhibits a maternal protectiveness that belies her adolescent appearance and tends to make the hero extremely dependent on her (a situation reflected in much of our popular music where the recurring motif is "I want you, I need you, I love you"). The boy's actual mother has little personality, little influence on his life, and even less of a role, while the girl friend is the only one who can control him. The disguised family romance usually found in these movies becomes, in *Giant,* more explicit. One of the main objects of dispute between Rock Hudson and James Dean is Hudson's wife, Elizabeth Taylor. Only she offers the boy understanding and tenderness, and it is primarily for frustrated love of her that the boy fashions his revenge on the moneyed families of the town.

The antagonism which the boy feels toward society, convention, law and order is, of course, merely an extension of hostility toward his father. While Brando's films are not concerned much with family life (the isolation of the character he plays is complete), most of James Dean's films center on the family situation, a fact which accounts for a good deal of his posthumous popularity. In *East of Eden, Rebel Without a Cause,* and *Giant,* Dean is found in violent combat with his father or father figure. In *Rebel Without a Cause,* for example, the crucial scene occurs when the boy lashes his father for his weakness and for having no effective advice to offer him in time of trouble. In *East of Eden,* the boy is alienated by his father's indifference to him and his inability to see that his best son is not Abel, the conventional good boy, but Cain, the unconventional rebel. The boy's feelings toward his father, however, are, as we might expect, ambivalent. In one scene in *East of Eden,* the boy, whipped to indignation by his father's coldness, begins to pummel and ends by embracing him. The boy's acceptance by society at the end of these films is usually a symbol of filial reconciliation. The greatest reward the hero can achieve is acceptance by the group and the love of his father. And here we have a glimpse into the meaning of the hero's inarticulacy, for we are led to believe that his original alienation arose out of misunderstanding. Conflict is caused by a failure in communication; the boy cannot express his true feelings and therefore the father thinks him hostile. In the

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final scene of *East of Eden,* the father has suffered a paralytic stroke and is dying. He lies mutely on his bed (the camera shooting from above emphasizes his helplessness), his arms and lips paralyzed, able to signify assent or denial only with his eyes. Only then, when the parental authoritative voice of the father is quiet, when there can be no interruptions from him, when the fear he has instilled has been dispelled by his powerlessness, only then can the boy speak truly, coherently, and clearly, and effect understanding and reconciliation.

Ambiguous feelings toward the father (leading to hostility toward society in general) is, of course, a classic juvenile dilemma, and there can be little doubt that the inarticulate hero is fostered and cherished by the juvenile elements of our society. The striking thing to note is how effectively adolescents have been able to persuade our culture today to conform with their views of it (a recent ad for *Look* Magazine promises the life of Jesus as seen "through the troubled eyes of a teen-ager"). It is significant that not only Marlon Brando and James Dean have become spokesmen for the adolescent generation, but Elvis Presley as well; for Presley is the musical counterpart of the inarticulate hero. For the first time in recent memory, popular music has discarded intelligibility, even on the most basic level. Beginning by ignoring language, rock and roll is now dispensing with melodic content and offering only animal sounds and repetitive rhythms. In Elvis Presley, the testament of Stanley Kowalski is being realized, for, besides the physical resemblances and the explicit sexuality they share, both prophesy the ruin of culture. It is no accident that the costume of the inarticulate hero (blue jeans, T-shirts, sneakers) is primarily the same as that of the proletarian hero. The burden of protest has been handed down, as a heritage, from the one to the other. Denied the social and political outlets rebellion once was permitted to take, the adolescent is now seeing dramatized, in his music and in the movies and TV, the only rebellion left him, the Freudian protest. Although this rebellion often has an apparently happy ending with the hero securely ensconced in the bosom of his family, in reality nothing has been resolved: the hero is never seen in a mature action. The adolescent rebel never grows up; when James Dean grows to middle age, in *Giant,* he merely has some powder added to his hair.

These films, then, give the hero an appearance of growth but derive their success from catering to the anarchic impulses of the young. Inarticulacy is a symptom of this anarchy because speech is an instrument of control. To teach children to speak is to teach them to frustrate their sexual and aggressive desires. To accept this speech is to accept all the difficulties as well as all the glories that speech entails: the teachings of the father, the complexity of the world, the discipline of a developing intelligence, the gifts of tradition, history, science, and art. To reject it is to find consolation in raw feeling, in mindlessness, and in self-indulgence, to seek escape in sex and violence. In the hero's inarticulacy, we find represented the young American's fears of maturity, for to speak out—to be a speaker—is to be a man. It is to replace his father, to take the consequences of his hostility toward him, symbolically to kill him. The unnamed sin for which the hero is beaten, at the end of most of these films, is the sin against the father. When this is expiated by physical punishment, then the hero finds his way home, not to independent manhood but to the kind of security which breeds conformity and complacency.

We can see how much of the acting and the writing of the inarticulate hero is not only neurotic but conformist. The need today is not for a hero who seems to be a rebel while really conforming to an established pattern, but for a hero who, without rejecting language, tradition, education, and art —without finding consolation in the impulsive anarchy of Stanley Kowalski—can express the non-conformism which stems from a long, hard, individualistic look at the world.

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AN OUTSIDER VISITS THE ROMAN GHETTO

The Past Lives On

STEPHEN P. DUNN

THE light of Rome is supposed by enthusiasts to be different from that of any other place on earth. During the seven months of my stay there, I often debated with myself whether this was true or merely a tourist's fable. The conclusion I finally reached was that the light was one of the elements of an atmosphere which made everything at least look different from the same thing anywhere else; here, normal standards are suspended and the improbable can happen and be believed without mental effort or strain. The air, mellow but crystalline and absolutely free—at least to the senses of a city-dwelling American—of soot or smog, bathes objects and people in a diffused and peculiar radiance. Present and past interpenetrate each other, and at last cannot be distinguished: the same sun which shines on that young Italian riding his motorscooter to work, and on that tourist seeking his pleasure, shone on Cicero as he campaigned in the Forum, and on the sturdy Goths of Alaric's army as they walked around surveying their new conquest.

There are indeed many improbable places to be seen in Rome, and many more improbable people to be found there, but of all the curiosities and relics of a buried or half-buried past which greet the visitor's eye, one of the strangest is the district still generally called "the Ghetto," although its walls and gates—the physical ones, that is—were torn down over a century ago. Here we are confronted, not only with an assemblage of ruins such as we may see in any corner of Rome by looking a little below the surface of things, but also with a numerous and crowded community maintaining a sort of fossilized existence, more or less cut off from the strong and complex currents of modern life. This community, as it stands today, is the product of social forces which are not, I think, peculiar to this special place and time, but which have operated here in more clean-cut and obvious fashion than anywhere else: hence its interest for the sociologist.

The Ghetto area proper extends from the southwestern base of the Capitoline Hill to the Tiber, and for something less than half a mile along the river front. It is very small —less than ten square blocks, as a New Yorker would reckon it. This is the oldest continuously inhabited part of the city, having been used without interruption ever since Neolithic times; it was probably the meeting place and battleground for people from the three ancient villages—on the Capitoline, Palatine, and Esquiline Hills—from which Rome was formed three thousand years ago. It is also the lowest part of the city—below river level in a wet year—and therefore, until the Tiber was diked up in the middle of the last century, the unhealthiest. During classical times it formed part of the Suburra, even then a notorious slum. In the 14th century, at the low point of Rome's trajectory, when it was only a large and disorderly village, with livestock pastured in the Forum and vineyards planted on the Palatine Hill, this area was still the center of its population. Later, when the

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THE Ghetto community of Rome, which stretches back in time to dim antiquity, is described by a student of anthropology and free-lance writer who lived for almost a year within its confines, studying its population. STEPHEN P. DUNN has contributed articles to the *Scientific American, Harper's,* and the *American Scholar,* and has also published a book of verse, *Some Watercolors from Venice and Other Poems.* This is his first article for COMMENTARY.

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city began to recover its population and prosperity, many of its noble families built handsome *palazzi* here. But the district has long since sunk into a sort of venerable squalor, vividly lit here and there by gleams of antique beauty. Between the columns of the portico built by Augustus Caesar for his sister Octavia, behind the typical beaded curtain of an Italian shop door, the kosher butcher plies his trade. Entering a small, dingy restaurant, one may see, built into the wall behind the bar, a marvelous frieze of gamboling beasts, carved no doubt by some exiled and long forgotten Greek. The lovely early Renaissance façade of the Palazzo Cenci—built by and named for the doomed and bloody family of Shelley's play—hides dozens of one-room dwellings, without running water, toilets, or separate cooking facilities, which are inhabited by as many as nine people.

There have probably been Jews in Rome since 167 B.C.E., when the newly established Maccabean dynasty in Palestine concluded a treaty of peace, friendship, and trade with the Roman Senate, and exchanged envoys with it. The first large nucleus of Jewish population, however, arrived during the period of the Roman protectorate over Palestine—69 B.C.E. to 80 C.E.—and particularly after the final fall of the Temple, which ended this period. Many Jews came as slaves and prisoners of war, others of their own free will, mostly as merchants. Settled in Rome, they were not only tolerated by the government, but granted significant privileges—exemption from direct worship of the Emperor (incumbent upon all others), from military service, from jury service and the like on their holidays, and so forth. In the tolerant, cosmopolitan atmosphere of Rome, their stern, Jahvistic religion softened its outlines and threatened to wither away altogether. The so-called Jewish catacomb of Porta Portuense bears eloquent witness to the crumbling of Judaism as a faith—as well as to the material prosperity of its adherents: two conditions which seem often to go hand in hand. In the inscriptions, we find almost no Hebrew, unless it be the common word *shalom*, or one of the names for God; on the other hand, we do find quotations from the pagan poets (in Latin or Greek), and sentiments such as this (over the tomb of a four-year-old boy): "Weep not, Samuel; no one is immortal." In the murals which decorate the tombs, we may see representations of pagan deities, or symbolism borrowed from one or other of the mystery cults prevalent at the time.

In a sense, it can almost be said that the advent of Christianity saved Roman—and thereby perhaps European—Judaism from extinction. It did this by immediately setting up an impenetrable wall between the rest of the community and the Jews, thus removing the pressure toward conformity which had operated in their community for four centuries with such striking results. Although their relations with their Christian neighbors have undergone changes, this wall remained intact for more than fourteen centuries, and it is only now beginning to crumble away. Yet, when we speak of a wall, we must specify what we mean. It is nothing like the phenomenon which appeared in northern and eastern Europe, where the "pale" was a symbol of hatred and rejection in the Christian mind, and, in another sense, a legal and physical protection for the Jew against popular hostility, which might at any moment break forth in pogroms and other acts of persecution. No one is more tolerant and less fanatical about anything—with the notable exception of his own comfort—than your ordinary Italian, and your Roman is the Italian par excellence in this respect, as in some others. Left to himself, he would probably have accepted the Jew as an equal with no reservations whatever. But this could not be. Rome, from the advent of Christianity until that of the Italian Monarchy, except for periods of virtual anarchy and gang rule, was always under the control of a theocratic power, whether Imperial or Papal; indeed, some would say that it still is so. These powers had reasons of their own for putting and keeping the Jews in a particular position

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relative to the Christian community, and much of the time they had the means of doing so. The Jews, after all, were said to be witnesses, even if involuntary ones, to the truth of the Christian revelation—exhibit A for the defense, so to speak; hence they, alone of all non-Christian—indeed non-Catholic—groups, were allowed to subsist. At the same time, they had to be kept firmly in subjection, so that all could see that they were being punished for having rejected Jesus.

Under the Christian Emperor Theodosius they were speedily demoted to second-class citizenship, or rather—since in my opinion citizenship is an all-or-nothing matter—to non-citizenship. They were barred from public office, and prohibited from engaging in the liberal professions and in various other trades and occupations, especially including those having anything to do with foodstuffs which might eventually be consumed by Christians. These restrictions gradually became a constant preoccupation in Roman legislation concerning the Jews. They were also required to wear a distinctive sign on their persons—again the first of many such ordinances. With the barbaric invasions we lose sight of the Jewish community, as of everything else in the neighborhood of Rome. Nothing more is known for certain about it until in 1170 the Spanish Jewish rabbi and world traveler Benjamin of Tudela passed through Rome and noted that its Jews were few—not more than two hundred males of canonical age, indicating a total population of six to eight hundred—but extremely prosperous. At this time the city was nominally governed by the Senate—an aristocratic body of varying composition, subject to a certain amount of popular control, exercised in a rough sort of way by means of sticks and stones. But in reality anarchy prevailed, and the Jews dealt with all parties impartially in a business way and were often called in as umpires and peacemakers. Still, however, the Jew had no civil rights; unless the Senate or some other authority decided otherwise, he was, as George Orwell put it, an "unperson."

During the next few centuries, the Popes gradually assumed firm temporal sovereignty over Rome and its environs, reducing the Senate to a rubber stamp and finally dispensing with it altogether. As their power increased, successive Popes proceeded to legislate the Jews into their peculiar position as combined witnesses and scapegoats.

In 1555 the Bull *Cum nimis absurdum* was issued by Pope Paul IV (called by the German Jewish historian Abraham Berliner *"der Allerschrecklichste"*—"the most terrible of all"); this was certainly one of the most ferocious pieces of anti-Semitic legislation ever carried through anywhere before 1933. By the provisions of this Bull all Jews in the Papal states were confined to ghettos in either of two cities, Rome or Ancona, and were placed under a curfew. They were forbidden to engage in any occupations except those of refuse-collecting and trade in secondhand goods (which, significantly, are still the predominant occupations among the Ghetto community); they were forbidden to own real property, to associate with Christians in any number of ways—attending them as physicians or midwives, employing them as servants in any capacity, eating or drinking or conversing familiarly with them, and so on. Various limitations were also placed on their religious and ceremonial life. In subsequent Bulls the Popes relaxed all these restrictions somewhat in detail, for they found that if they bore down too hard on the Jews the economic life of the city suffered. The main lines, however, had been set. About a century after *Cum nimis absurdum*, a Bull was issued by Urban VIII perpetually freezing rents on all premises in the Ghetto —which were, of course, owned by Christians, since Jews were forbidden to own real estate. Thenceforth anyone who held a building or an apartment in *gazzaga*, as it was called (from an Aramaic word meaning a perpetual leasehold), could sell it, sublet it, give it in gift or in dowry, bequeath it, mortgage it, or lose it for debt, exactly as if the premises were his property. Furthermore, if any building were destroyed,

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the right of *gazzaga* applied equally to whatever might be put in its place. The landlords meanwhile were obligated to keep the premises in repair—an obligation more honored in the breach than in the observance, as the present condition of the buildings shows. The role of such a law in fixing the population geographically is obvious enough.

Not only were the Jews legally forbidden to live outside the Ghetto, but certain historical events combined to increase the already serious overcrowding. In 1492 the Jews were expelled from Spain and shortly afterward from the Spanish territories in Italy. Many of the expelled Sephardim, as they were called—native Italian Jews being known as Italiotes—settled in Rome, whose Jewish population thereby doubled. The resultant congestion and economic competition led to the setting up of a detailed and sophisticated written constitution for the Jewish community. This document remained operative in amended form until the end of Papal rule.

The stage is now set. For three hundred years the pattern of Jewish life worked itself out within this squalid and constricting setting. The Papacy, chronically in want of funds, bled the community white with special taxes and forced loans which were never repaid. Rome became a byword among Italian Jews for social and intellectual backwardness. Finally, in 1848, the great year of revolutions—after the Jews were abortively liberated by Napoleon's troops in 1803—a crowd of Christians, fired by the eloquence of the liberal priest Ambrogio Ambrosoli, tore down part of the Ghetto wall. The following year the Tiber overflowed, making the Ghetto uninhabitable, and its residents were dispersed to various parts of the city, from which many of them never returned. In 1870 Garibaldi's troops entered Rome and the political power of the Papacy was ended. All Bulls and other Papal regulations were abrogated, and the Ghetto ceased to exist officially. What actually happened at this point was that the Roman Jewish community split in two: those of its members who had a little more initiative than the others, or a little free capital, moved out of the Ghetto area and set themselves up in business or in the professions elsewhere; there they were joined by immigrant Jews from other parts of Italy, from North Africa, and from the Near East. Together, these now form a loosely knit group or congeries of groups, representing every economic level and every degree of religious commitment and social participation. On the other hand, the poorer, more conservative elements of the community stayed behind: these people still inhabit what used to be the Ghetto, as well as—to a smaller extent—a contiguous area across the Tiber, and some settlements in the *borgate* (suburban slums) which may properly be considered colonies of the Ghetto. These people now form a tightly knit, economically specialized and depressed, highly tradition-minded group.

Any consideration of this "nuclear community," as I call it—in contradistinction to the somewhat larger and less compact "peripheral" Jewish group living outside the Roman Ghetto—must necessarily bristle wtih contradictions. The very existtence of the community itself is a matter of question: Jews who do not live in the Ghetto area or its outliers insist that there is no such thing, while those who do live in the Ghetto are equally sure of the opposite. One informant in the first category announced to me solemnly, with the air of someone who has just unearthed a profound truth, that there were and always had been two kinds of Jews in the world—those with and those without money—and that this was the whole explanation of the matter. The historical shortcomings of such a hypothesis are obvious. Again, anything which would tend to emphasize the separateness and social autonomy of the nuclear community is likely to be slurred over or conveniently forgotten. For instance, the characteristic Jewish social institutions—those which handle the expenses of circumcision, marriage (including the granting of dowries), and other religious observances for the poor—are commonly supposed, by the peripheral community, to be

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extinct, and to have had their functions completely taken over by charitable bodies directed from the peripheral community—and even, in a few cases, from abroad. Yet I interviewed several people who claimed to be members of the circumcision-society (called *Societá dei Compari,* or Society of Godfathers), and to have used its services in recent years—presumably since the war. The time-honored Jewish custom of giving dowries, too, is denied in the peripheral community, but is very much alive, at least psychologically, in the nuclear one: almost everyone here thinks there should be dowries, although no one whom I encountered was in a position to do anything about it. The truth seems to be that the well-to-do, educated Roman Jew is profoundly ashamed of his less fortunate brethren, and would deny their existence entirely if he could. The nuclear-community person, on the other hand, knows this and resents it, consciously or unconsciously, so that he feels almost as separate from a wealthy Jew (with at least one important exception which I shall describe later) as from a Christian or a foreigner, if not more.

As I have said, junk-collecting and peddling from pushcarts are the chief occupations in the nuclear community; together they account for about 70 per cent of the men in my sample. There are also some shop assistants and other lower-echelon, white-collar personnel, but these are found mostly in outlying districts, not in the Ghetto area proper. This specialization reflects, and is reflected in, a part of the nuclear community's system of values which in its turn is expressed in a curious item of linguistic usage. When the returns started to come in from a preliminary questionnaire which I had administered to members of the community, I was surprised to find that the vast majority of them had listed themselves as "unemployed" (*disoccupati*). I later learned that to these people the word "employed" (*occupato* or *impiegato*) carried either one of two unexpressed qualifications—and sometimes both: "at manual labor" and "for wages or a salary." "Unemployed" did not therefore mean that the person in question did nothing, or had no source of income, but simply that he did not—technically speaking—work with his hands, and that he had no employer; a busy doctor or lawyer would have been equally "unemployed"—although the word was not applied to those who owned shops. The cardinal fact about the nuclear community is that its members—the core, that is—would rather starve on their own, doing something which can be classified, however speciously, as trade, than make a living by any other method.

Given hard work and a good deal of luck, ragpicking and peddling will support a bare existence. As practiced, they usually amount to begging, and this shows up another salient characteristic of the nuclear community: its main resource is charity. This charity must come from outside itself, and the community must therefore, and to that extent, be called parasitic. Nevertheless, its members consider that the institutions by which charity is dispensed belong to them, in a very real sense, more than to the patrons and administrators from the peripheral community. Thus the very mechanisms by which their essentially dependent status is exemplified become means of binding them more firmly together. This is a frequent and interesting social phenomenon, but in few settings is it shown so strikingly as here.

DURING my interviews I asked the informants, most of whom were women, whether they traded by preference at Jewish-owned shops. Some answered without hesitation that of course they did. Others, however, drew my attention to the curious fact that there are no Jewish-owned shops dealing in staple foods in the Ghetto area. This rule does not apply to food in general: there are in the area two Jewish restaurants, one of which is internationally famous; a "bar"—for coffee, pastries, aperitifs, and the like, and not to be confused with its American namesake; a tavern; and a candy store, well known throughout Rome, in Christian as well as Jewish circles. However, nuclear-community people, like members of most

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low-income groups, spend a large proportion of their budgets for staple provisions—especially, in this case, the various forms of *pasta,* on which they chiefly live—and for these they must go to Christians, even in the heart of the Ghetto area. This seems to be a holdover from the days when Jews were officially forbidden to trade in staples; it illustrates the strong grip of tradition, in trivial as well as in major matters.

In interviewing informants, I was struck by the extent to which the women of the nuclear community apparently took the initiative in holding families together, and even sometimes in keeping their members alive. It is largely due to the women that the community is such a stable one. As for the man of the Ghetto, twenty generations of grinding poverty and social isolation cannot but have left their mark on him. I do not think that the Ghetto man creates this weak and spiritless impression merely because he is usually a beggar. In Italy this is a recognized occupation, and no moral stigma attaches to it there, any more than in the Orient. As a handicapped person in a wheelchair, I was myself given money spontaneously several times while I was in Rome; what would certainly have seemed a deadly insult in this country hardly even surprised me, after the first time—except perhaps as an implied comment on the way I was dressed!

Many of the women, on the other hand, show some of the same elemental sturdiness which one finds in long-established peasant populations. I was interviewing an incredibly ancient Ghetto woman, and asked her whether she had any friends or relatives who visited her regularly. *"Eh, no, son quasi tutti morti*—No, they're almost all dead," she replied, with a typically Roman tone and gesture expressing half-humorous resignation mixed with a sort of astonishment. Such ways of talking and acting are in fact standard lower-class Roman and not Jewish at all, except as the Jews are the oldest identifiable element in the population. These people are basically urban peasants, millennia removed from the slick operators of the Corso and the Via Veneto, only a mile or so away.

The nuclear community's experience with Zionism is highly revealing on a number of counts, and will also serve to introduce us to the attitudes of other Roman Jews toward the nuclear community, with which they must somehow deal. First, it may be well to say a few words about Italian Zionism in general. This has always been more or less of a hothouse plant. Because of the special situation in Italy—the small number of Jews (never in modern times more than 40,000), and the relatively small amount of pressure under which they were placed, except for the brief period of actual German occupation at the end of the war—emigration to Israel never seemed to them, as it did to their confrères elsewhere in Europe, a simple and obvious solution to a pressing problem. Instead, the Zionist tradition has been kept up by a handful of dedicated people from the upper middle class, proudly conscious of their Jewish heritage, and looking around for a dramatic way of expressing this consciousness. The impulses which might have turned it into a genuine, large-scale popular movement were abortive.

From 1947 through 1949, many people from the nuclear community went to Israel. All of them of whom I have any knowledge—except for one woman, whom I shall describe later, and her husband—were back within a year, and usually less. Many reasons were given for this, both by those who had been through the experience and by others who had not: simple homesickness; disappointment at the hard conditions of life encountered; disorientation aggravated by the language-problem and the immigrants' lack of technical skills of any kind. The first two of these were probably the more serious, since the third could always have been overcome given the will to do so. One of my informants summed up the matter with characteristic earthy common sense by saying: "Here you don't work and you don't eat; there you work—and you still don't eat. So—we stay here."

But the trouble went deeper than this. I was frequently told by informants from the

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peripheral community—particularly those with Zionist sympathies—that people such as the woman I have just quoted lacked the necessary intellectual and spiritual preparation for the experience; they were simply not of the stuff of which pioneers are made. Again the question remains: why? Here is where a historical point of view may help us. Although the people of the nuclear community know that they are Jews and are proud of it, they know very little about Judaism, and it means, essentially, very little to them. (This applies to those over about twenty; with the children the situation is different, for reasons which I shall show later.) Remember that religion is not emphasized in Italy as it is here. It is not necessarily one of the first things you know about a person; until informed otherwise, you assume that he is a Catholic, and that is that. Also, perhaps because constant Papal interference forced Roman Jewry to keep its religion, and the rest of its cultural life, under wraps, it never developed the concentrated, almost fierce intellectual tradition of the Ashkenazim. In fact, the Roman community was cut off even from the Jewish intellectual life of the north Italian cities, exemplified by such men as the philosopher Leone Ebreo (in Hebrew, Yehudah Abbrabanel), author of the *Dialogue on Love*, the Aristotelian scholar Leone da Modena, friend and collaborator of Pico della Mirandola and others, and the Biblical and Talmudic scholar Azariah de' Rossi. Roman Ghetto Jews remain to this day largely cut off from the main current of Judaism, which, since the final triumph of the Inquisition and the expulsion of Islam from Europe, has flowed increasingly through Ashkenazic channels. By the same token, they are not now visible as Jews to Jews from other countries. Thus it can be seen that, as far as emigration to Israel is concerned, the Italian Jew in general, and the nuclear-community person in particular, lacks not only the preparation but the raw materials for success.

When I brought up matters connected with Zionism, many of my informants from the peripheral community seized the occasion to abuse the Ghetto Jews for the same kind of faults of which Negroes and poor whites are commonly accused in this country: laziness, shiftlessness, provincialism, lack of pride, lack of practical and financial sense.

WHAT follows is a fairly typical though somewhat elaborate expression of this attitude. The speaker is a woman who had emigrated to Israel in 1948 and made a good adjustment there and was now back on a brief visit. Though she had been born and brought up in the Ghetto area, and though her sister lived there at the time, she was somewhat detached from its modes of life and thought. This was presumably due to experience at the Jewish orphanage in Rome in early youth and in a Zionist training program later. My general impression of the informant was of a rather rigid personality with a positive, doctrinaire approach to life and a limited emotional range.

"Look, now I'll tell you: the poor part, the Jews of the Ghetto, are of such a restricted mentality as is difficult to find among other European Jewish peoples. Why? They don't get away from this environment; only the rich ones, their money makes them rise up a bit; not even the elderly ones, but their children get away from that environment. And for the matter of Israel there are few willing to suffer, to do jobs that here they consider unworthy, not respectable, willing to work that way, because in Israel every kind of work is respectable, because even if a woman goes out to do any kind of work, the important thing is that she earns her own bread; . . . and really to suffer hunger, because there living is very low, so low that it's difficult to say, and to suffer for the bare necessities, because life is difficult even for the adults. There is the matter of getting used to the climate, which is severe; not everyone is prepared for the conditions; you have to go there with a certain idealism, then you can go there."

In a reply to a remark of mine about the financial habits prevalent in the nuclear community, she commented:

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"It's true: for you know they say that the more money a person has the less he spends. The person who has little money says: I have little; if I put it aside the little I have won't help me any; so he spends it."

It is, of course, not the investigator's job to allot praise or blame. Nevertheless, it would seem that, to the extent to which such characteristics as this informant described exist in the nuclear community, they are the result, rather than the cause, of extreme and long-continued poverty. I asked several informants what they would do if they were suddenly to win a large sum of money, as one may do every week in Italy, on the soccer-pool, or the government-sponsored lottery. Most of them said either, "Get the children settled," (i.e., with dowries) or, "Buy a house"—replies which indicate at least some grasp of the principles of money and property; the latter, of course, in nuclear-community terms.

On the whole, however, it is futile to expect middle-class virtues of a group which is not and never has been part of the middle class. Besides, it is doubtful whether, even if the nuclear community's common prejudice against wage-labor were overcome, its situation would be improved much. Rome has a curious, top-heavy economic structure. It is not an industrial city, or a center of trade as such; vast numbers of people are occupied with government service, and most of the rest seem to live by taking in each other's washing. Under these conditions, under-employment is and must be a chronic problem. It is my impression—which, like much of what I have said, borders on what is called a "value judgment," and therefore would be out of place here if this were intended as a purely scientific treatment of the matter—that the strictures leveled against the Ghetto people are an expression of a collective guilt-complex on the part of their critics. There are some well-to-do Jews, including one of the most beloved and respected members of the community, a life-long resident by choice in the Ghetto area, who did not join in the criticism. Whether this stemmed from conviction or from natural mildness and sweetness of temper, I could not tell.

THERE are several forces and institutions now at work which tend or aim to disintegrate the nuclear community and to reintegrate its members either with the population as a whole or with the rest of Roman Jewry. They operate by varying methods and with differing effects. Taking the most obvious of them first, we may say that the Jewish elementary school is on the whole a consolidating influence. This institution was founded in 1922, immediately following the passage of the Gentile Law—so-called after Giovanni Gentile, its sponsor and Minister of Education at the time—which was one of the first measures enacted after Mussolini's accession to power. This law placed the Italian primary and secondary school systems under the tutelage of the Catholic Church in certain important respects, and made instruction in Catholicism an official part of the curriculum. The Jewish elementary school was founded at this time by a group of wealthy Jews who did not care for this idea. Sometime during the mid-30's it was granted official parity with the public schools —as had previously been done for the Catholic parochial schools—and, by the Racial Laws of 1938, all Jewish children were obliged to go there rather than to regular public schools. When I came to Rome, I found the Jewish school flourishing: enrollment had increased steadily since the end of the war (during which operations had to be suspended for two academic years), and a newly established bus service was bringing children from remote parts of the city. The school is part of the government-directed school system, inasmuch as the non-religious part of its curriculum is determined, all its teachers are examined and appointed, and all its examinations set and marked under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. However, all its teachers whom I know of are Jewish and many of them bear surnames characteristic of the nuclear community. The school devotes about four hours per week to instruction in Jewish religion

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and culture under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi of Rome, but its character as a religious institution cannot be measured by this criterion alone. At every opportunity, the students' attention is directed to their Jewish heritage, and the entire Jewish ceremonial year is elaborately celebrated.

The schoolhouse is located on the southwestern bank of the Tiber, opposite the Ghetto area, so that anyone coming to it must pass through this area, unless he is coming from the same side of the Tiber—the so-called Trastevere district. Of the school's approximately 500 students, an estimated 350 come from the nuclear community—a proportion contrasting sharply with the nuclear community's share of the total Jewish population, which is just over one-third. (Of late years, more children from the peripheral community have been enrolling than was the case in the past; in a short while the student body may be divided equally.) All my informants were agreed that the vast majority of nuclear-community children attended the Jewish school, and furthermore that those who did not attend acquired a decidedly different attitude toward Jewish religion and culture than the others. To this extent, therefore, we must class the school as a nuclear-community institution. However, we must not forget that in intention, and partly also in fact, it cuts across the narrow boundaries of the nuclear community and tends to weld Roman Jewry into an organic whole. Its effect, in sociological terms, seems to be neatly balanced between these two tendencies.

The next Jewish institution in order of social importance is probably the orphanage. This is housed in a handsome old building, the Palazzo Tolemei, located in Trastevere some distance away from the Ghetto area itself. It has room for about fifty children, equally divided between boys and girls. It takes not only orphans in the strict sense but children with one living parent or, if the family situation as it stands is particularly undesirable, children with two living parents. Its director since the war has been a Polish Jew, survivor of a concentration camp—a strong but not intrusive personality, with very definite ideas about the care of children. He told me that at present the severest punishment with which a fractious child at the orphanage could be threatened was that of being sent home. He said further that those who did return to the nuclear-community environment after having been in the orphanage for any length of time were revolted by Ghetto conditions and made every effort to escape. Making all due allowances for the informant's bias, this appears to be true. Several "graduates" of the orphanage who were among my informants showed very different traits of personality from what was usual in the nuclear community and were mentally and spiritually detached from its life, even when they lived in its immediate neighborhood. Some of them, indeed, attributed their apartness to their special experience: "I spent some time at the orphanage; you get a different viewpoint there," was a typical remark. The experience of the woman who said this antedated the present director's tenure; the state of affairs which it indicates cannot, therefore, be attributed to the influence of his personality. The avowed aim of the orphanage is to destroy the nuclear community as such, and there can be no doubt that it has this effect.

ANOTHER institution in this same class is the trade school. This is conducted by the international organization ORT (Organization for Rehabilitation in Training), with headquarters in Paris. The aim of this organization is to increase the reservoir of technical and manual skills in the Jewish population. In so doing, it runs counter to a long-established tradition in European Jewry as a whole, and in the nuclear Roman community particularly. The effects of this program on the nuclear community are interesting. The nuclear community supplies almost the entire student body, but many of the students have great difficulty in following the courses because of inadequate preparation. One part of the program, how-

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ever, has produced striking results—up to a point: this is a project for training girls in the needle trades, which have long been traditional among the women of the nuclear community, forming an exception to their general inexperience with manual work. A year or so before I arrived, ORT International had offered a series of scholarships to promising students to learn *haute couture* in Paris. There were many qualified students, but none of them would accept the scholarships. Paris was too far away; it was not like Rome; how would they get back to Via Portico d'Ottavia (the Ghetto's main street) every Friday evening to see their friends? It was the Palestine experiment all over again: away from their ancestral home, these people feel lost and their sense of reality is deranged. Another interesting item: when the graduates of this program came to be placed a difficulty was encountered, in that they would not work on the Sabbath. Any Ghetto Jew is willing to collect trash or tend to shop or a pushcart on Saturday, but he is convinced (with no Scriptural warrant as far as those versed in such matters can make out) that working with his hands for wages is contrary to his religion. This illustrates an important aspect of the psychology of nuclear-community people, which I was unable to get to the bottom of, but which is certainly basic: namely, their tendency to emphasize and retain precisely those parts of their religious heritage—as they see it, with or without benefit of Scriptural authority—which make it most difficult for them to adjust to the world around them. I know that this is fanciful psychologizing, but it almost seems as if they desired to retain the familiar comfort of their depressed status, even with its miseries.

With regard to the Jewish social institutions generally, it is important to note an acute problem faced by those who direct them. How can they wean the Ghetto people away from ways of life and thought which are considered undesirable, without at the same time weaning them away from Judaism itself? The rabbi, and other prominent figures, pointed out to me the fact that the devoutest Jews in Rome were also the poorest and most ignorant—all without seeming to realize in the least the implications of what they were saying.

BEFORE taking leave of the nuclear community and trying to summarize what we have learned about it, we must say a few words about what is always a burning issue, both socially and sociologically in any situation of this kind: mixed marriage and inbreeding. My original population sample (based on all children treated at the Jewish free clinic since its inception, including automatically all students at the Jewish elementary school), contained 656 families. Of these, more than half bore one of thirteen common surnames, any one of which would be recognized by any Roman Jew as belonging to the core of his community. This indicates a very high "coefficient of inbreeding," as the biological term has it, for the community in the past, and this is confirmed by other data. In examining official records of marriages at the headquarters of the Jewish Community (a corporate body charged with maintaining Jewish religious life and keeping vital statistics), I did not find more than a handful of mixed marriages among people whom I recognized either by name or residence as belonging to the nuclear community. These findings, however, are not air-tight, because time was lacking in which to complete the check, and because the records themselves were incomplete from my point of view. A high rate of inbreeding is indicated also by the biological data which my father, Professor Leslie C. Dunn, collected at the same time that I was doing the social study. One important blood group gene, the so-called B factor, proved to be twice as frequent among the inhabitants of the nuclear community as in the surrounding population.*

What can we say in summation? The nuclear community as it stands today is the product of a peculiar historical process. In

*See "The Jewish Community of Rome," by Leslie C. and Stephen P. Dunn, in the *Scientific American* (March 1957).

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this it resembles, to be sure, every other human group, from the Murngin of the Australian bush to the city of New York. However, in this case, the bare bones of history are neatly laid out for our inspection. The forces of Papal interference and fiscal spoliation, together with the humanitarian efforts of some Popes toward social justice, have stamped an indelible mark on the community, as the die cutter stamps the metal placed in it.

What accounts for the survival of the nuclear community's peculiar social and cultural features so long after the end of the historical situation which gave rise to them? Partly, of course, mere historical inertia. But partly also the fact that the Ghetto Jew, in the bosom of his community, lives as he and his ancestors have always lived, and is accepted by his peers on that basis. Once he goes outside that community, he is made to feel like a failure, a beggar, and of course no one likes this. No matter how miserable his life may be, he is a person solidly based in a close-knit social unit. In this he differs radically from the usual inhabitant of a slum in this country, or for that matter in any other part of Europe. From this fact arises his deep though primitive and uninformed religious sense and his curiously persistent though rudimentary sense of values. Once in a while, an unusually articulate Ghetto Jew will even tell you that the ways of life for which his forefathers suffered and sometimes died—though by no fault or choice of their own—are good enough for him—though he does have a choice.

ROMAN GHETTO

HAROLD NORSE

Del Popolo D'Israele Sei Milioni Le Innocenti
Vittime In Europa Del Bieco Odio Razziale.

—Engraved on the Synagogue of Rome

I

We are not loud. Our women dress in black,
Their hair tight and decorous, some
beautiful.
We should be ugly or presumptuous,
if it were true
What they say of us. But our dignity
Was not bought, we never connived
like upstart princes
For an empire, whose guest we are.
They fenced us here, untitled, contraband.
What we are, we earned.
Our seven-branched candlestick lies in mud
Of the river by whose banks we pray.

In groups, embracing, at the iron gate
Of the synagogue, in the November dusk,
Here on the left bank of the Tiber,
By the date palms and plane trees,
Subdued, fresh from worship, we stand
In the old ghetto quarter, unpromised land.
We have come a long way.

If you ask, we could not tell
Where we have come from;
we know only
That it is winter, that we light our candles
For the dead, we marry, cold and hunger
And exile divide, destroy.
Where are we going?
To dinner, radios and children.
Were we bitter,
Different and deformed, that caricature,
That lying nose scrawled on Europe's walls,
Should we, then, be so different, target
Of barbarian "virtues"?
Some recall
The journey in the desert, the rock that
flowed,
The sea that spread an avenue hedged by
waves
Suspended and trembling till we crossed
the Red Sea bed.
That was long ago; we do not pretend
Such importance now. There was no sea

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That split, no mountain and no street
Of miracles, manna for memory
Here, by the busy shops
Where hanks of wool for mattresses
Hang like white hair
and Octavia's Portico
With wounded pillars
Darkens by sides of beef
and creaking palms.

Only the whispers in the kitchen,
The prayer in the closet.
Silence and defiance,
and everyone confused.
Only the disaster
without reason;
The fire and slander
without an avenger;
Confusion without a prophet,
Squalor without a goal.
After the mourning, the freezing of hearts;
After the shame, the shred ends of decency.
How long can a lie endure?
Two thousand years now we have crossed
the river,
Over the Bridge of the Four Heads,
Ponte de' Quattro Capi,
Worn smooth and faceless by wind,
Older than the emperors,
By wind, rain, touch;
And we going to market across the river,
Whose arms embrace the Island,
To market and to prayer. When
will this end? When
Will the lie cease to devour
Our faith, older than most histories?

II

What are angels? We are not angels.
Our flesh, like bread, turns ash and coal
If we are baked, bones break in the ditch.
The wind howls through our ignorance.
If the essences
Of spirit speak to us, with staff and sword,
They speak to remind us: "You who are
chosen
Cannot choose. You made the Lord,
The Lord of Hosts, and are the host
To Heaven, conscience of the Ghost.
(And we are cut to bits who wrestle most.)
Israel, striver with God, the devil
Will not give an inch, will sacrifice
Your seed and harvest till God rise
And spread his rainbow like a cloak
Of many-colored light upon your eyes."

III

We, I say we, I mean I: not race,
Nor nation, color, but sole self, dark
In cellar-hole hiding, cold
Where no light is; unloved, loved
One, open to glance and gesture,
Embrace and the struck face.
One, whirled out of Babylon
Beyond the waterclocks and stars,
Papyrus, camels and bulrushes,
Tablets of Sinai, knife of the cross.

From the Chaldean journey to the rock
Where Isaac knelt his head and the cleaver
Shook, from the beard of the patriarch,
And the slime-sown valleys of Noah,
The olive-dove and the salt-turned-Sarah,
I mean I, mouthing the bitter way,
Grape gone vinegar in the teeth,
And my Lebanon turned to gall.

When the tablets broke on the mountain,
After the lightning and holy anger,
Plague struck, the covenant cracked,
I could not pray. I have been praying.
I remember the fate of saints,
The circumcision stigmata
Running from the creative wound
Of God's finger, organ of birth.
The pain of my knowing wakes my death,
I make my death my life.

We, I mean One. I am that I am,
Of Jehovah and the prophet's loin,
Lean messiah and blood of the Lamb
Over the waters, world's egg,
Whale sperm and the field's clover.
I was there, bare, unfurled in prayer
As nude as light when light shone
Through chaos, and I was the only One.

HAROLD NORSE has been abroad for several years, and is presently residing in Florence. A native of New York, he took degrees at Brooklyn College and New York University. His verse has appeared in numerous literary journals; in COMMENTARY he has previously published fiction and criticism as well as poetry.

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CELIA IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

A Story

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

CELIA ABRAMS stood in the middle of the room with her hand over her mouth. "God in heaven," she said to herself, "what is a person? What is it that he is?"

She shut her eyes against the disorder and pulled at her hair. There was no place to sit down. Dishes were on every chair. Bedding and curtains were heaped on the kitchen table. The closets were emptied onto the beds and there were boxes still to take out of the corners, from behind the piano, from under the beds. Fifty years of living were strewn around her feet.

The buyers came in a steady dribble all day. They offered fifty cents for her ironing board and a dollar for her bed. They did not care for her dishes or her piano or her leather-covered rocker. Some looked for a television set. Others wanted picture frames. A woman came hunting for Wedgwood china.

"How should I know what china I have? Three sets dishes from my wedding and from the movies my girls collected and a few pieces from my brother. Look over and see." The woman wouldn't even look. She walked out without a word.

"Go and let me think," Celia said as the door shut. She felt as if she were on the verge of understanding. One more thought and she would know. What? She wasn't sure. Six weeks had gone by like a ride on the steeplechase tornado. She had not yet recovered her balance.

Celia opened the last box in the closet and found gowns from all the weddings she had attended. Her own wedding dress was at the bottom, wrapped in yellowed tissue paper that was falling to pieces. The embroidery was stiff and the beads were crumbling, but she didn't cry. She had cried out all her tears, even the ones she didn't know were in her.

The first two weeks after Morris had gone she lived in a stony silence. Friends and family came to console her but she accepted no condolences. Everyone knew that she had had forty years of poverty and quarreling. There was nothing to say. Yet she found it hard to believe that there would be no more anger between them. It was as if they had argued and he had gone out for a walk. When they quarreled, he would not eat and she would not talk. He would taunt her while she ate his supper as well as her own. "Eat," he would say, "eat yourself into an early grave."

Celia waited until her children went back to their work and the relatives stopped coming. It was on a Friday that she looked at the clock and it was the exact time it had been the night she found him bent over the sewing machine in the store downstairs. Anguish came in like a tide. It was as if she were drowning.

The children and the relatives came back and a doctor brought sedatives. During that week when she scarcely knew whether she was alive or dead, everything was settled. The store was sold. The apartment was put up for rent and the furniture for sale. Her youngest daughter would take her. She would live in the country in a white-shingled house, surrounded by trees and flowers. She had never been there, but a relative had brought a report.

"I sat there on the porch," she said, "and listened to the birds twittering. And I said to myself, I must be dead. Otherwise how

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SYLVIA ROTHCHILD's stories and sketches of American Jewish life are well known to readers of this magazine.

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would I come to the Garden of Eden?"

"Twittering birds I can live without," Celia said. "It's my daughter Marilyn I have to live with. I'm afraid of her. I don't know what's in her mind. I don't know what to say to her. It's God's truth. I'm her mother, but I don't know her."

After the commotion at the cemetery, Celia was even more frightened than before. No one had known what to do or say. Morris Abrams had been a belligerent atheist. Marilyn, however, stopped the pallbearers with a shriek. "Say something! Say something for my father," she screamed. She ran wildly through the cemetery till she found an old gray-beard at the gates. Everyone had to wait while she gave him her father's name and the name of his father and the names of his children so that the Hebrew words could be said. Morris's sister was furious. "It's just what he hated, just what he didn't want. What are they but actors and thieves full of blessings and hocus-pocus."

ALL THEIR words rang in Celia's head as she unearthed a box of old bathing suits, her son's tennis racquet and ice skates, and her youngest daughter's baby clothes. Her memories were as unrelated as the things in her hands.

"I wanted to help him," Celia told herself. "That was all I wanted." As she said it something became clear. She had tried to save him from poverty and loneliness, but poverty didn't bother him and he liked to be alone. He had tried to save her too. He was always reading to her. "Look what goes on in the world," he used to say. "Don't be like the other beasts who sleep and eat and eat and sleep. See what goes on before your eyes!"

"Do me a favor and don't make me over," she would say. "I'm satisfied to be a beast. It costs you dear?"

Yet when his sister argued with her, he always took his wife's side. Celia tried to remember when it was that her sister-in-law had shouted, "Why do I waste my time talking to an illiterate fool?"

He told her to go and laughed at Celia. "An illiterate, my dear wife, is a person who cannot read. Since you can't read you can't keep it a secret forever. But if you aren't a fool then you will shut your ears when my sister talks. She hasn't said two sensible words in ten years."

In retrospect, his words seemed gentle, but at the moment she had turned on him. "Shut my ears," she said, "and sew up my mouth and close my eyes. Then your educated sister with her three diplomas and her Bolshevik papers can talk all she wants."

Celia wondered whether he knew that she would have given an eye for one of those diplomas. Could his sister have known how many times she tried to go to school? In each school it was the same. All day she worked like two horses. When she sat down in a class at night her eyes began to close and her head grew heavy. She told her friend, the Tante, all about it many times and the Tante sympathized. She had known the same feelings.

"All day I have the strength of iron," Celia said. "But God forbid I should sit down. Sitting down I'm not worth two cents."

It was not as if she had given up. Only a year ago she had bribed a little girl with cookies and candy, hoping that she could teach her. Susie was in the first grade. She came into the shop to show Celia her first book.

"See," she said arrogantly, "I can read."

After she read all the words she knew, Celia said playfully, "Teach me the words. Teach me the words and I'll give you an ice cream."

For a week the little girl came to "play school" with her. Celia knitted her brows and mimicked Susie. "Alice and Jerry. Alice and Jerry have a pet pony. Alice lives in a house. Jerry lives in a house. . . ." Susie covered the pictures with her hand and Celia guessed the words. But on Friday, when they came to page nine, Celia found she could not remember page one. On Monday Celia said sharply, "Go home to your mother, I have no time."

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"What hurts me," Celia told the Tante while they sipped tea together, "is that Morris has anything you would want in his head. You need figuring? He can figure. You want to know what goes on in the world? He knows. You want languages or philosophy? He's there waiting. When Marilyn was home, the two of them could sit and talk two hours and I couldn't understand one word. What is there to talk that I shouldn't know what it is?"

"It's the same with my boys," the Tante said comfortingly. "Do you think I understand when they talk to each other. Sometimes it's hard for me to believe they're talking English."

"With the same brains, couldn't he figure the rent or the grocery? I hear he tells a friend they should change the laws the world should get better. But he never looks in my face to see if I'm laughing or crying. And he couldn't change himself from here to there. You know him! If somebody sits down in his chair, there could be ten empty chairs in the house and he has no place to sit. What can I do with him? They leave a hem for him to make. He asks a dollar. They leave fifty cents. He takes it! Doesn't say a word. Is this a man?"

The Tante, a true friend and comforter, shook her head agreeably. "He's been this way sixty-four years. You can't do anything now."

"Oh, if I only had the head for it and the education, I would know what to do," Celia assured her. "I wouldn't bury my head in a book or a newspaper. I would open a little business for myself. I would fill my pockets and I wouldn't be ashamed. With money you can live. Without it you drag yourself along. You look like nothing. You are nothing."

A Puerto Rican couple felt her bed and opened the dresser drawers and shook their heads as they turned to go.

"It's not even good enough for them," Celia said bitterly. She put her coat over her shoulders and went down to the drug store to call her eldest daughter.

"Sarah darling, please take some things," she begged. "I can't stand it any more. They'll never buy it all and I can't stay here and sell my life away. Take something!"

"I have everything I need, Mama," Sarah said. "I have no room for old things."

"Then take a little thing for a remembrance."

"Mama, I don't want a remembrance. I have my own life. I don't need remembrances."

"I'm sorry," Celia apologized. "I only mean the best for you."

Sarah called the dealer for her. The truck came on Friday morning with two strong red-faced men whose indifference terrified her. She watched them lift the sagging couch on experienced shoulders. The lamps were carried off casually as if they were umbrellas. The rocker in which she had nursed her children was upside down on the sidewalk. Celia walked nervously from window to window, cracking her knuckles while they took the pictures and mirrors off the walls. The rug that she had washed in ammonia twice a year and wrapped in camphor for thirty summers was dragged down the steps like a rag.

"Look what you're doing!" she shouted. "Are you crazy?" But they didn't hear.

She was panic-stricken. She was sure they wouldn't pay. They would fill the truck and drive off. She didn't know who they were. How could she chase them? But she would stand in front of the truck, they would have to run her over before they could leave. She began pulling old shopping bags from the cupboard next to the sink where she kept her store of bottles, jars, and pieces of string. She ran from room to room picking up a chipped ash tray, a picture, a battered frying pan. When three bags were filled, she hid them in an empty closet. Then she went down and waited beside the truck.

"That's it, grandma," the driver said. He counted the money and put it into her hand. "Sign here, please."

She stuffed the bills into her apron pocket and signed her name, slowly, carefully, in the German script her father had taught

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her when she was a child. Her eyes filled as the truck disappeared down the street, but she knew that the women were all at their windows, watching. She wouldn't give them the satisfaction. How they would like to tell their husbands, "Abrams is gone and did she cry." Instead Celia turned to a toothless, deaf old crone who sat on a box in front of the house all day. "I feel," she said, "like I was coming to America. I came with a pillow and two shopping bags and that's all I have left today."

The old one grinned and shook her head, delighted that someone spoke to her.

"I tell you," Celia said bitterly, "a man of straw is better than no man at all."

The Tante came out of her fruit market, next door, in time to overhear. She wiped her hands on her apron and said "You're correct, my dear friend, absolutely, a hundred per cent correct. When your partner's gone, you know what I've struggled for twenty years. It's a terrible thing to run a business alone. You did right. You'll never be sorry."

"Sorry? I'm sorry already. You know where I'm going? That's how much I know."

"Don't be foolish," her friend chided. "May my best friends have no worse. A son-in-law a doctor with a beautiful big house, and children good as gold. You'll live like a queen. Listen, any time you want to come and live in a hole, come here to me. I'll rent you my daughter's room. Go in good health and don't worry!"

Celia looked sadly at the little shop, hidden behind the sign "Will Open Under New Management, May 20." She knew where every variety of button, snap, and lining was stored. She knew the prices that were never marked, the sizes of thimbles, shields, and welting. The young man who bought it would not believe that she had never taken inventory.

"Someone asks me for something and I don't have it, I buy a few," she said. "We made a living from this store for thirty years. We sent a girl to college. We didn't have big eyes, but we always had enough to eat."

His smart young wife turned up her nose. "I never in my life saw such a pile of junk." She spoke of fluorescent lights and new counters. She would not consider it without new flooring and venetian blinds.

The thought of it made Celia burn. "Money poured down the drain," she told the old crone when her friend went to take care of her customers. "I gave everything away to those young smart-alecks. I gave it away for nothing like a crazy woman. Abrams was my eyes. Without him, every piece of paper is the same. It's worse than blindness. It's better to be an eight-year-old child who can read a street sign and know what subway he's crawled on to. That's why I sold the store. That's my only reason. I need to be a queen in my daughter's house? I should better be a scrubwoman in my own house. Suddenly you don't wake up a queen. You have to be born to it. Alone, your soul's your own. That's what I believe!"

The old one looked ahead vacantly. Celia shook her head. "I'm blind and you're deaf. We're a pair."

CELIA's eldest daughter and son both begged her to spend the night with them until Marilyn came for her in the morning. She was stubborn. She borrowed a chair and an old army cot and spent her last night in the apartment. She woke with a start at half-past five. She had been dreaming that she was waiting at Castle Garden, resting her head on a burlap sack. She was twelve years old and alone. While she waited Morris ran past her. A mob of people were chasing him. She found a stick and beat them off.

Celia was trembling when she sat up, clutching the wooden support she had pulled out of the army cot. Her cheek was sore from the rough cotton. She could not remember where she was. The apartment was unrecognizable without furniture.

At seven-thirty, however, Celia sat at the window in her slip and sipped a glass of hot water, in which she dropped a quarter of a lemon. People were hurrying to the subway. Cars were going by. It gave her a feel-

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ing of accomplishment to see them go by. She noticed the clothes the people wore; the new hair colors and styles. The contents of the refrigerator were on the window sills. She carefully finished the left-over cottage cheese, a cucumber, and a hard-boiled egg.

At nine, she was ready in her winter hat and leather gloves. She wore her best dress and carried a pocketbook new and unused for six years. She carried her bags and boxes down, one by one. The suitcase was tied with twine. Most of her clothes and the family album were in a heavy corrugated carton that took an hour to tie. She stood in the doorway and waited.

Marilyn double-parked the car and ran out to her. They embraced quickly.

"Thank God, you're here," Celia said. "If I had a penny for every foolish thought that comes in my head, I'd be a millionaire."

"I thought Phil or Sarah would come to help you," Marilyn said.

"Who needs them? I can't help myself?" Celia said peevishly. Marilyn opened the trunk and together they struggled with the boxes.

"Just one favor," Celia begged. "I promised I would leave an address in the fruit store. She's my best friend in the whole neighborhood."

Marilyn left her address at the store. The Tante embraced her and wished her well. "Your mother is a wonderful woman. May she have what I wish her! Let me give you a few grapes for the way. She loves the purple grapes. Crazy for them!"

Marilyn worried about the car while the Tante carefully pulled off the bruised grapes. "I was here first," a customer grumbled. "How long do I have to wait?"

"I'm sorry," Marilyn apologized. "I'm not a customer."

"Business first and pleasure later! Give me some apples they would have a taste. I pay fifteen cents a pound for apples and they taste like potatoes, like raw potatoes. What's the matter with everything?"

The Tante pretended not to listen, but finally she turned and said, "Nothing's the matter. May I drop dead this minute if you can get better apples. When is the season for apples? Ask this lady here, a doctor's wife lives in the country. Ask her when apples come."

Marilyn looked out impatiently. "Tell her, darling," the Tante begged.

"In September," Marilyn said wearily.

"So what did I say? September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, and May. What taste can they have nine months later? You're lucky they kept the worms away so long."

"I have to go," Marilyn said as she reached for the bag.

"Go in good health and come in good health and write me a postcard. Tell me how she is. I love her. I love that woman."

Marilyn ran to the car while the arguing continued. "I'm not a farmer and I'm not interested in the seasons. I only know if I pay a price, I want something for my money."

Marilyn shuddered as she opened the car door. She had been away for fifteen years but the neighborhood and the people in it still upset her. It was as if she were still in danger of being sucked back into the ugly rooms and the subways. She recoiled from the nagging voices and was depressed by all the people waiting at windows and stores for time to go by. When she was eighteen she imagined it all to be monstrous and subhuman. Fifteen years later it was only sad and poor, utterly depressing.

"Is the door locked, Ma?" she asked with studied gentleness. "I don't want to lose you."

They drove across Brooklyn to the highway that would take them to Connecticut. "It's another world," Celia said. She enjoyed the traffic, the houses, the bright-colored cars. "Palaces," she said. "Little palaces, each with a garden and a porch. If your father hadn't been so stubborn, we could have come a long time ago." After an hour had passed, the towns looked alike and the forests and fields ran into each other. Marilyn turned on the radio to fill the silence.

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"It's only six weeks since Papa went away," Celia said. "We can live without music a little longer."

"The children are fine," Marilyn said for the third time. "And Sidney is busy at the hospital."

Celia looked for something to say. "Your aunt came last week to say goodbye," she said cautiously. "She found me in the fruit store and blabbled for two hours. She's angry with you for the prayer at the cemetery. She's angry with me for my whole life, for everything I did and everything I didn't do. My intelligent, educated sister-in-law. Her learning fits her like a hat fits a horse. Do you know what she said to the Tante? She says, 'I'm living with a man for fifty years. I have children and grandchildren. In a few months I'll have a great-grandchild. But if I had married him, I couldn't have stayed two weeks with him.' And she laughs at me," Celia said.

CELIA dozed fitfully during the last few miles and awoke with a start when the car stopped.

"We're home, Mama," Marilyn said.

Celia took her daughter's hand so that she could pull herself out of the car. She looked up at the large white house, screened from all the neighbors. "It's big," she said, "bigger than I thought." She put her hands to her ears. "How still it is!"

Then the children came running. She devoured them with her eyes. "Country children with apple cheeks and brown legs. From whom did they get so beautiful?" The older ones ran away, but the youngest let her press her nose against the nape of his neck.

Marilyn took care of the packages while the girls pulled Celia through the house.

"And this," Joan said, is the living room. . . . and this is Daddy's office. . . . and the dining room. . . . and upstairs. . . ."

"Take me back to your mother," Celia begged. "I'm lost. I could never find my way back."

"Do you like it?" Marilyn asked proudly.

"It's like a magazine picture," Celia said. "It's so perfect, I'm afraid even to sit down."

"You'll get used to it," Marilyn assured her.

"It's too nice," she said. "It's too nice for me."

Celia examined the bright yellow kitchen and admired the gleaming stove that had no flame and was governed by little buttons. Marilyn showed her all the clever gadgets, while Celia smiled and didn't listen. "It's not for me," she said. "It's altogether not for me. I'd be afraid to touch anything."

Marilyn opened the last bag and found the soap dish with a sliver of soap, a battered frying pan, a coat hanger, a fly swatter, and a kitchen clock that had not worked for fifteen years.

Celia watched her with embarrassment. "It's nothing with nothing," she said. "I was frightened. I thought maybe I would need some things."

Marilyn pulled out the remnants of an old kitchen curtain. "What would you need this for?"

Celia opened her mouth and closed it without saying anything. It was too much to explain. "It caught me here," she said and thumped her chest. "Look it over. If you could use something, keep it. If not, throw it all away."

Marilyn looked worried. "Why don't you lie down and rest while I get supper?" she asked.

"I couldn't help you?" her mother begged.

"You can unpack your things, if you're not too tired?"

"Who's tired?" Celia said. "What hard work did I do today?"

She had trouble catching her breath when she climbed up the steps to her room. "You would think I never climbed steps before," she said jokingly as Marilyn put her boxes on a chair. She insisted on opening everything herself and told her daughter to go.

First she draped an old housedress over the pink chair so that she could sit down on it. She pulled off her shoes and rubbed her toes against the soft blue carpet, while she examined her room. The wallpaper was pink with red roses. The chintz curtains

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matched the pattern of the paper. She shook her head at her reflection in the mirror over the dresser. Her face looked green against the pink. Her wispy gray hair was as brittle as straw. She hung up one dress and put some underwear in a drawer. She stopped to finger the smooth edge of the bed. The walnut was polished as smooth as glass. She had always insisted on metal beds to discourage the bedbugs and roaches. She tested the mattress and found it smooth and resilient. The children played beneath her window and the baby cried. An insect hummed on the sill and leaves blew against the roof. She tried to think of the empty apartment she had left that morning, but it was in another world. Though she fought to keep them open, her eyes closed.

Something in the breeze that shook the curtains made her dream of a house she hadn't seen in fifty years. It brought back the feel of the dirt floor and the brook that trickled beside it and the mildew that covered her clothes in the morning.

"We're here to help you, Grandma," a shrill young voice squealed into her ear, suddenly. The little boy jumped up on her bed and sat on her as if she were a horse. Two icy little hands covered her eyes.

"Guess who?" the voice said.

Celia hugged them with one hand and pushed them off with the other.

"You didn't unpack," the older girl scolded.

Celia struggled to her feet. "First let me wash," she said. The three children followed her as she opened the closet door and the door to the attic.

"Where could the bathroom have gone?" Joanie giggled.

"Where could it be?" her sister echoed.

"Laugh, little ones," Celia said. "Laugh at an old grandma. She can't even find the bathroom or turn on the faucet. She doesn't know how to work the stove and won't even be able to boil herself a pot water."

"I can turn on the stove for you," the older girl offered. "I'll turn it on any time you want."

Celia bent down and kissed her head. "That's a good girl. Now take everybody downstairs and I'll come soon."

When they were gone she pushed the valises and boxes into the empty closet. She brushed her hair and spoke to her reflection in the mirror. "The Garden of Eden is no place for you, Celia." She knew that in a few days, a week at the most, she would return to her friend the fruit lady and live in a familiar hole. "Oh, dear husband," she said, "when it comes to changing myself, I'm no better than you. May you sleep well, you in your Garden of Eden and I in mine."

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

EARLY SCIENCE AND JEWISH BELIEF

From the "Matteh Dan"

DAVID NIETO

DAVID NIETO (1654-1728), minister to the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community of London in the early 18th century (see "An 18th-Century Defender of the Faith" in COMMENTARY, July 1954), was trained in medicine and astronomy as well as in Rabbinics. Attempting to square the Copernican revolution with traditional Judaism, Nieto felt impelled to reject the heliocentric conception of the universe, inasmuch as it represented a clear contradiction of explicit statements in the Bible, but he was quite prepared to accept other conclusions and implications of the new astronomy—among them the view that life exists on planets other than ours. Far from clinging to the old anthropocentric view of the universe as being essential to religious faith, Nieto invokes the name of the Provence scholar, Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi, surnamed "The Orator," who in the 14th century hinted at the possibility that the stars might have more functions than merely to provide illumination for the earth. In this Bedersi was preceded by Maimonides, who had asserted that ". . . man should know his station, and not erroneously imagine that the whole universe exists only for him."

THE following selection—in my own translation—comprises paragraphs 130-145 of the Fourth Dialogue of Nieto's *Matteh Dan or "The Second Kuzari,"* published in London in 1714 both in Hebrew and in Spanish. Nieto here adopts the form of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*—an imaginary dialogue between a Jewish scholar (the *Haver*) and the King of the Khazars (the *Kuzari*), ultimately leading to the latter's conversion to Judaism.—JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

* * *

HAVER: The earth on which we dwell is a planet. On it are seas and rivers, mountains and valleys, human beings endowed with the gift of speech, and dumb animals. A cycle of four seasons marks our earthly year. Why, then, should the like of it not be found on *other* planets? . . .

KUZARI: I would never have thought that the claims of the latter-day astronomers were sound.

HAVER: They certainly dò recommend themselves to Reason. It is just that we are unable to accept that particular aspect of the modern concept which denies the revolution of the sun. For in the Book of Joshua it is written: *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon. . . . And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day* [Joshua 10:12f.]. From this it follows that normally the sun does revolve like the rest of the planets. And even though the protagonists of this view have gone into contortions to resolve this contradiction, they have labored in vain, for their reply is unsatisfactory. I have, therefore, rejected this view, and prevented it from being grafted on to the Heritage of the Lord.

KUZARI: Do let me hear how they attempt this harmonization.

HAVER: They argue that the Prophet said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon" only on account of the multitude who consider the sun to be a moving body, and who do not know about the movement of the earth.

KUZARI: There is no substance to this attempt at harmonization. . . . But I do want to know whether you believe what they say about the planets' being inhabited worlds.

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HAVER: This latter greatly appeals to my mind. For I concur heartily in the words of our Sages who taught us: "Rabbi Meir found a nut. Its kernel he ate; its shell he discarded." We ought to do the same with the arguments of the Gentile sages. Whatever is opposed to our holy and perfect Torah, whether it be the Written or the Oral Law, we must not believe. But in matters which do not contradict its words or its amplifications every individual Jew is free to believe or to reject as his reason sees fit. And, since there can be no possible harm in the belief that all the stars—be they planets or fixed in the Eighth Sphere—are worlds containing all kinds of living creatures, I maintain strongly, and without fail, the correctness of this view. It is, moreover, possible that our Rabbis, of blessed memory, had just this in mind when they wrote, at the end of the Tractate *Uktzin,* that "God will in future cause every single righteous person to inherit 310 worlds."

KUZARI: The words of the Sages cannot serve as sufficient proof. Perhaps they referred to *spiritual* worlds.

HAVER: It is for this very reason that I spoke of the *possibility* that such might have been their intention rather than of the certainty. . . . I remember seeing long ago in the days of my prime, words in a book by Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi which would tend to support this modern view.

KUZARI: Let the word of the wise man be spoken, and we shall honor you for it!

HAVER: He took up his parable about the heavenly bodies and said: "For this reason, too, has their Creator endowed them with power. . . . placed them in changing positions and opposite directions, necessitating activity among the intelligences to direct lifeless, inert bodies, and by giving them the ability of taking on forms to avert the shame of formless matter. Not for this were they created: to be subservient to perishable creatures whose betters they are." . . .

KUZARI: What the wise "Orator" has to say would seem to be completely irrelevant. . . .

HAVER: On the contrary! His words are the very essence from which everything is derived. For Reason could not tolerate the thought that the Divine Creator created bodies myriads of times bigger and more valuable than the earth for the sole purpose of giving light to those who dwell on it. Particularly so would this apply to the tremendous number of stars suspended from the Eighth Sphere which have no other relation to, or influence upon, the earth except to teach the children of man the strength of God's power and wisdom. This being so, we must needs say that they were created for some other purpose as well. Bedersi, however, could not mention this other purpose in his book, for, in his day, about 400 years ago, everybody believed in the words of Aristotle as though the very spirit of the Lord were talking through him.

But closer to our day and age, about 150 years ago, wise and understanding sages arose, and they said: "Why is this philosopher different from all other philosophers? And why should we have to believe those words of his which have been hewn from the mine of his own intellect? Was it by him alone that all of God's actions were weighed? Do we not have a mind, just as he did, to penetrate the deep layers of Natural Philosophy? . . ." So they examined his writings, and found in them any number of things contrary to sense perception. And thus they . . . proclaimed: "We have no portion in Aristotle, and no inheritance in his wisdom!" . . . And they arose and invented a new science, more rational, and geared, as far as ever possible, to the evidence of sense perception. With this new science they refuted the words of Aristotle and the early astronomers, particularly the view of those who maintained that the forms of the Eighth Sphere exert an influence, by means of their light, upon all the dwellers on earth. They suggested, instead, that the stars of that Sphere and their constellations are each and every one of them a sun in its own right, which gives light and heat to the particular world immediately underneath it. This cannot, of course, be seen by us on account of their great distance from us. . . .

It is, indeed, possible that Bedersi did not know anything about this, and it is for this reason that he did not mention it in his book. But it is, at any rate, certain that he thought these stars and constellations served a great purpose which is unknown to us.

KUZARI: I am convinced that this is the correct and logical view.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

A DEBATE ON RACE

The Tocqueville-Gobineau Correspondence

MELVIN RICHTER

BOTH Arthur de Gobineau and Alexis de Tocqueville must be numbered among the most original thinkers of the 19th century. Although their ideas were quite incompatible, coincidence made them friends, and friendship produced a sustained correspondence. To readers a century later, the most provocative passages in their letters are those that argue Gobineau's racial theories. But these ideas, like Tocqueville's criticism of them, are incomprehensible except when viewed in the context of the great controversy that has not yet lost its power to divide and embitter Frenchmen: the controversy over the French Revolution.

In Paris governments can still fall, or fail to come into being, over issues and ideas that date back to the 18th century. Since 1789 French politicians and thinkers have always had to take a stand toward the Revolution and the beliefs of the Enlightenment philosophers who prepared its way. The extreme right has of course opposed the Revolution and all its works in furious invective. The center in French politics has never found any ideals it preferred to the secular rationalism of the 18th century, nor offered any political settlement to replace that of the Revolution. The French left, although less enthusiastic than the center, has criticized, not the essential principles of 1789, but only their insufficiently radical application.

Gobineau (1816-82) and Tocqueville (1805-59) belonged to the aristocratic class that had lost most by the Revolution. Yet they differed fundamentally in their interpretations of it. Tocqueville considered the aspirations of its first period to be noble and disinterested—the attempt to realize in political life those ideals of freedom and equality which Judaeo-Christian tradition had already applied to individuals in their relation to God. What Tocqueville condemned was the Jacobins' destruction of political liberty in the name of equality during the Robespierrean phase of the Revolution. All such distinctions Gobineau rejected. The Revolution for him had but one significance: it marked the victory of racially degenerate plebeians over racially superior aristocrats. In his concept of race lay the foundation and much of the superstructure of that doctrine of an "Aryan master race" which has had such atrocious consequences for our own times. Tocqueville found Gobineau's racial theory both unscientific and immoral. Throughout this correspondence, his letters have a prophetic quality, the point of which is clearer to us today than it was to his contemporaries.

The Tocqueville family was Norman. Tocqueville's father, when only twenty-two, was condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal, and only the fall of Robespierre saved him from the guillotine. Under the Bourbon restoration he became a Prefect and a member of the Chamber of Peers. Through his influence his son Alexis became a magistrate. The Revolution of 1830 convinced the younger Tocqueville that Europe was in the throes of transition

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MELVIN RICHTER, whose present essay is addressed to an important chapter in the history of race thinking, was born in Revere, Massachusetts, and earned his bachelor's degree, and his doctorate in political science, at Harvard; he has also studied at Oxford University in England. Mr. Richter has published in the *Review of Politics*, and is currently working on a book on the English philosopher T. H. Green.

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to a democratic kind of society it had not previously known. To study the prototype of the democratic and egalitarian society that he believed inevitable for Europe, he traveled to the United States in 1831. Out of the nine months spent in this country came his classic *Democracy in America,* published in 1835.

In 1839 Tocqueville began his political career as an independent member of the Chamber of Deputies, where he remained for ten years, distinguishing himself intellectually but never exerting much influence. When Louis Napoleon came to power as the first President of the Second Republic, after the Revolution of 1848, he made Tocqueville his Foreign Minister. Tocqueville had hoped for a moderate republic. He resigned when he found that Napoleon was seeking, not ministers of integrity, but accomplices for the coup d'état that was to make him Emperor.

This marked the end of Tocqueville's active political career. The last ten years of his life he devoted to study and to writing two important works: *The Old Regime and the Revolution* and his *Recollections.* Both of these are dominated by his search for the origin and nature of the historical forces that had made possible Louis Napoleon's plebiscitary dictatorship.

Tocqueville died at the height of his powers, filled with bitterness at the prospect facing France. He thought it highly unlikely that she would ever enjoy the balanced and regulated liberty of a democracy, moderated by the influences of religion, custom, and law. After comparing the history of France to that of Britain and the United States, he concluded: "If a great revolution is able to establish liberty in a country, a number of succeeding revolutions make all regular liberty impossible for very many years." Subsequent French history has confirmed his insight that the Revolution by the violence of its later phases had divided France into irreconcilable groups.

Gobineau's life was crucially affected by his relations with Tocqueville. Their correspondence, which began in 1843 and ended in 1859, the year of Tocqueville's death, contains both intense controversy and avowals of friendship. When they first met, Tocqueville, the elder by eleven years, had already made his reputation, whereas Gobineau was still an unknown young man from the provinces seeking a career in the Paris of Louis Philippe. He discovered that his noble but impoverished family could do little for him in the capital. Not until many years later did he inherit from his uncle the title and income that enabled him to cut a figure in accord with his aristocratic pretensions. Tocqueville, needing a research assistant, employed the younger man who was even then dogmatic and perversely brilliant. When Tocqueville became Foreign Minister in 1849, Gobineau became his private secretary; later he made his way into the diplomatic service where he spent most of his remaining life. While serving in Germany, Persia, Brazil, and Sweden, Gobineau wrote a great many books, among them his most significant work, the *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races,* which appeared in the early 1850's.

Gobineau repudiated any and all political compromises that might have united the divided France of his time. It was the cynicism born of his despair which enabled him to serve the Second Empire. He regarded it as the type of despotism that alone could rule the degenerate mass of Frenchmen. With the advent of the Third Republic, which he excoriated, he went off to Rome where he lived out his last years.

During his lifetime Gobineau enjoyed his greatest and almost his only fame among the slaveholders of the United States (though, as he himself noted, they omitted translating what he wrote about the racial degeneration of white Americans). At the turn of the century, and again between the two world wars, his ideas attained some popularity in France and even more in Germany. Through his influence on Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Richard Wagner, he contributed to the development of Nazi racial theory. His political, as distinguished from his racial, views made themselves felt in the mystique of Vichy France. One of his descendants, the Comte Serpeille de Gobineau, not only worked to popularize his ideas, but also collaborated actively with the Germans under the occupation, thereby maintaining the family tradition of despising patriotism as plebeian and Jacobin.

GOBINEAU'S *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* amounts to a total repudiation of the moral ideals and political achievements of the 18th century. Chagrin at the downfall of his class may have been what really led him to regard Western society in the 19th century as sterile and decadent, but

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he sought to justify this view by a new interpretation of history. Using the reductive method highly characteristic of the century he despised, he sought a single key to the understanding of human history. Denying that it was determined either by great men, the moral virtue of nations, or by ideas, economics, or physical environment, he found the all-determining factor in the inborn inequality of men, in the very different capacities with which they were endowed by the very different and unequal races to which they belonged.

Gobineau asserted that in the beginning all men had belonged to one of three discrete races —white, yellow, and black—each of which possessed a unique constitution determined by the blood flowing in the veins of its members. Only the "Aryan" branch of the white race was endowed with energy, creativity, political stability, and the will to power. The great period of European history came when the Germanic tribes, after overwhelming the Roman Empire, erected feudalism on its ruins. Feudalism, in Gobineau's view, established an aristocracy of "Aryan" conquerors in Western Europe as rulers over a population corrupted by intermarriage with the Romans. From the blood that flowed in "Aryan" veins sprang everything that was vigorous and creative in European culture. But the "Aryans" had become bastardized by intermarriage with the peoples they conquered; this had sealed the doom of Europe. The French Revolution was but the political manifestation of racial degeneration. The inferior classes descended from the Gallo-Romans had subverted the proper order of society by pulling down their natural rulers, the "Aryan" aristocrats now weakened by miscegenation. Nor was there any hope of reversing the course of history. With the destruction of "Aryan" racial purity all hope was lost of a society which united faith, political stability, and force. "Adieu, ages of faith; adieu, days of hope. . . . The time of Horace and Vergil is past, that of Juvenal begins."

Gobineau viewed the philosophers of the 18th century as tender-minded sentimentalists. Their passion for freedom and equality, their confidence in reason, and in man's capacity to improve his lot through control of his environment—all this was nonsense in the light of racial science. How could there be any talk about the right to liberty of all men when science had demonstrated that a few were born to rule and the rest to serve? And how naive to prate about man's controlling his environment when everything was determined by heredity. It had been asserted in the 18th century that progress was the law of history. For Gobineau the chief problem of history was what made civilizations decline. His answer, which he claimed to have established scientifically, was miscegenation.

GOBINEAU was a defeated French aristocrat of the 19th century, not a German demagogue of the 20th. His sense of doom had its roots in his pessimism about the future of his class. Nationalism and patriotism he disdained as creations of the French Revolution. Nor was he anti-Semitic in the Nazi sense. He viewed the Jews as being as inferior as all the other Semites were to the "Aryans," but he displayed no particular hatred for them, nor did he assign them so great a role in history as did Hitler and Rosenberg. Among the "Aryans" themselves, he deemed the French and Germans to be racially vitiated beyond hope. The English he thought to be the most nearly pure in racial stock, although they too were defiled. The Nazi writers on race found Gobineau too pessimistic: what he had failed to envisage was "racial hygiene," that "final solution" which the Nazis discovered for the problems of Europe and the world. It was by this means that they proposed to restore the purity of that "Aryan" blood.

Tocqueville felt much less resentment than Gobineau at the loss of power suffered by his class. What worried him were the stern political choices confronting his generation. Not that he ever ceased to think of himself as an aristocrat. But for him aristocracy at its best meant a spirit of independence, the obligation to render disinterested service to one's fellow men, and the repudiation of that unheroic self-interest so dear to the bourgeoisie. He himself would have preferred to live in a stable society ordered on aristocratic principles, for he believed that men—all men—were most comfortable when living under a hierarchical system with clearly drawn class lines. But he could see no possibility whatever of reversing the process of social leveling set off by the French Revolution. Hence he sought to do what he could toward the application of his moral principles to the egalitarian society in which he found himself. He proposed to serve democracy as a candid friend who would warn men of those dangers to their liberty that were so

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apt to arise in an age obsessed with equality.

For Tocqueville the great problem of post-revolutionary France was whether the passion for equality would lead to the sharing of rights or to the sharing of political slavery. Would men live under a democracy controlled and checked by an ordered system of liberties, or under a dictatorship that oppressed all equally? He clearly foresaw the possibility that the rule of king, aristocracy, and church might be replaced by a more thoroughgoing, demagogic despotism. He warned against the danger that an individual or party, after having used mass support to overthrow a regime, might establish a worse tyranny in the name of the people.

II

The Tocqueville-Gobineau correspondence reveals a relationship that was perhaps most cordial when Gobineau was young and still unknown.* Their earlier letters abound in expression of mutual sympathy. Tocqueville had befriended the younger man and made possible his diplomatic career, and Gobineau tells his family that it is impossible to conceive of a kindness more complete and tender than that shown him by Tocqueville. The two men were united moreover by the manners of their class. "When nobility of spirit and delicacy of feeling are involved, we are and shall always be in the same camp," wrote Tocqueville to Gobineau. But when the latter started to develop his racial theories, Tocqueville began to show a growing antipathy. At first he tried to evade Gobineau's continued requests for his frank opinion on the *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*. But Gobineau, always proud and choleric, would neither tolerate reticence nor suffer criticism. Tocqueville then attempted to raise objections. Granted, he said, that people and nations gradually acquire certain distinctive characteristics. But these are in no way permanent and immutable, nor is there any need to explain them by racial factors. Gobineau is dogmatic and fatalistic because he so drastically oversimplifies. All the significant characteristics of a group are attributed to race. But how can such complex developments be attributed to one cause, and especially to a type of cause that can be neither proved nor disproved? To verify Gobineau's hypothesis would require successful prediction of a race's future, as well as a type of corroboration from the past which could not be supplied by any records then existing or likely ever to be found. So much for Gobineau's appeal to the past. As for his claim that the future would vindicate his predictions, Tocqueville later in his *Souvenirs* pointed out how such a resort was always open to both parties in a dispute. "After much vociferation, we both ended by appealing to the future, that enlightened judge who always alas! arrives too late."

Tocqueville to Gobineau

Saint-Cyr near Tours
November 17, 1853

". . . Presumably in each of the different families that make up the human race, there exist certain tendencies, certain special aptitudes which have their origin in a thousand different causes. But that these tendencies, these aptitudes cannot be overcome—not only has this assertion never been proved, but from its very nature it can never be. Whoever attempts it must have available to him not only the past but the future. I feel certain that had Julius Caesar found the time, he would have gladly written a book to prove that the savages he encountered in Britain were not at all of the same race as the Romans. . . .

"It is one thing to discuss families of the human race which are distinguishable by exterior traits that remain profoundly and permanently different from one another. Here your theory, although no more convincing, in my opinion, at least is less improbable and easier to establish. But when your theory is applied to any one of these great human families—the white race, for example—the thread of argument disappears with every step and becomes impossible to follow. What could be more uncertain than the attempt to learn through history or tradition when, how, in what proportions were mixed the racial stocks of men who show no visible signs of difference in their origin? All these events occurred in remote and barbaric ages which have left only vague traditions or fragmentary written records. In taking your way of explaining the destinies of various peoples, do you believe that you have made history any clearer or that the science of man has gained in certainty by having abandoned that path followed by so many great thinkers who have sought the causes of events

Correspondence entre Alexis de Tocqueville et Arthur de Gobineau, 1843-1859, L. Schemann, ed., Paris, 2d ed., 1908. This correspondence has not been translated, and the parts of it I quote here are in my own free English rendition.

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in the influence of men, emotions, ideas, and beliefs?"

In the next phase of the dispute, Tocqueville considers the fatalism of Gobineau's philosophy of history. Here he is concerned not with the validity of the theory as theory, but with its probable effects upon France and Europe, already so exhausted by war and revolution that, to many, liberty no longer seemed worth the struggle. Tocqueville contends that men can live in freedom only when they believe in themselves. To believe that civilization is decadent and that this is the result of an inexorable historical process which cannot be reversed surely must weaken the will to resist tyranny. Thus the theory of the *Essay* would perpetuate the worst effects of permanent inequality.

Gobineau had constructed a wholly idealized version of what life is like in a society where the many are subject to the few. In fact, permanent inequality completely demoralizes and debilitates, not only the ruled, but the rulers themselves. Tocqueville's experience in the United States had convinced him that the slaveholding class in the South was losing both its energy and its moral fiber. And to think that it was this form of society that Gobineau had chosen to praise!

Tocqueville to Gobineau

Saint-Cyr near Tours
November 17, 1853

"Can there be any purpose in persuading those sluggish peoples who are already living in barbarism, indolence, or servitude, that, being what they are because of their race, nothing can be done to better their conditions, change their customs, or alter their government? Do you not see that from your doctrine follow all the evils produced by permanent inequality: pride, violence, scorn of fellow man, tyranny, and abjection in all its forms? . . . I shall stop here. Permit me to let our discussion end here. We are separated by too great a distance for it to be fruitful. . . ."

Tocqueville to Gobineau

Saint-Cyr near Tours
December 20, 1853

". . . . you have chosen to support precisely that point of view which I have always considered most dangerous to our age. Quite apart from the fact that I believe your theory of history to be false in the extreme application that you give to it, this alone would make it impossible for you to convert me. The last century had an exaggerated and somewhat puerile confidence in man's power to control his destiny, both his own life and that of his society. This was the characteristic error of that period [the Enlightenment], but in the final analysis it was a noble error. While responsible for many follies, yet it produced many great achievements beside which posterity will find our age puny indeed. The fatigue and jaded emotions that follow from revolution, the miscarriage of so many generous ideas, and of so many great hopes, have now precipitated us into exactly the opposite condition. After believing that we could transform ourselves, we now believe that even the slightest reform is impossible. After excessive pride, we have fallen into an equally excessive humility. Once we thought ourselves capable of everything; today we believe ourselves capable of nothing. It pleases us to believe that from now on struggle and effort are futile, that our blood, our bodies, and our nervous systems will always prevail over our will and capacity. This is the peculiar disease of our time, and one quite at the opposite pole from that of our parents. And no matter how you rearrange your argument, it will support rather than control this tendency: it will drive your contemporaries, who are already too weak, to an even greater weakness. All this does not prevent me from seeing what is truly remarkable in your work. . . . But in the course of studying the German language, I have not become so German that either the novelty or the philosophic merit of an idea can make me oblivious to its moral and political consequences. . . ."*

Gobineau responded with a strong defense of his position. But he made no attempt to defend the validity of his evidence or his mode of making inductions from it. To Tocqueville's charge that Gobineau's theory, if generally accepted, would paralyze the wills of men, he replied that he was less concerned with the effects produced by his theory than with its scientific truth. Like the physician diagnosing his patient's ailment with clinical detachment, he was dealing with Europe's mortal illness, one that could not be concealed by industrialism and imperialism.

*Tocqueville was at this time studying German so that he could contrast conditions in Germany at the outbreak of the French Revolution with those in France at the time.

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GOBINEAU TO TOCQUEVILLE

Teheran
March 20, 1856

"I am tormented by your ceaseless reproaches that I am lulling to sleep those who are already drowsy. Yet if I do put them to sleep it is certainly not with caresses. . . . If indeed I do them damage, it is with acids and not with perfumes. What I am saying to my readers is not, 'You are guilty, or not guilty.' Rather I tell them, 'You are dying.' Nothing could be further from my mind than to contend that they cannot be conquerors for a time. . . . Far be it from me to encourage or discourage them; this is not my concern.

"But I am telling them, 'You have passed the age of youth, you approach that age which verges on decrepitude. No doubt your autumn is more vigorous than that of the peoples decaying everywhere else in the world. Nevertheless it is autumn. Winter is coming on, and you have produced no heir to succeed you. You may found kingdoms, great empires, republics—do what you will. All this is possible; I do not oppose it. Go, torture the Chinese, finish off the Turks, annex Persia—all this is possible and even inevitable. But while I do not interdict them, nevertheless the causes of your weakness continue to accumulate and are even aggravated by your activity. . . . The thirst for material pleasures which torments you is an indubitable symptom, as certain as the red cheeks of those infected by diseases of the lungs. All previous civilizations in the process of decay have shown these same symptoms and have congratulated themselves on their seeming vigor, as you do now. . . . Can I do anything about this? Because I state what is happening and will happen, do I affect in any way the days left to you?' . . .

"I am no more criminal than is a physician who says that the end is approaching. Either I am right or I am wrong. If I am wrong, then nothing remains of my four volumes. If I am right, then my facts cannot be altered by wishful thinking."

Tocqueville refused to accept Gobineau's image of himself as a disinterested clinician. He deemed Gobineau's method to be what today would be called an "ideology." Gobineau was defending values and prejudices he had acquired extra-scientifically, and he was doing so with any and every scrap of evidence he could find within a framework of assumptions he had never examined.

THE publication of Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* had produced no impression whatever upon French society, Gobineau complained to Tocqueville. Tocqueville answered with the remarkable prediction that Gobineau's ideas would find their natural audience in Germany.

TOCQUEVILLE TO GOBINEAU

Tocqueville, Manche
July 30, 1856

". . . Today there is no chance whatever that in France any intellectual work will receive either a lively or a lasting reception. Our temperament which has been so literary, particularly during the last two centuries, has undergone a complete transformation. What prevail now are lassitude, disenchantment, and a distaste for ideas. Instead, there is a love for detail that goes along with those political institutions which dull the intelligence like a powerful sedative. The class that really rules does not read. . . .

". . . thus I believe that your best chance of success is for your book to create a stir abroad, especially in Germany. Then it will be read in France. For in Europe it is only the Germans who become so enamored with what they consider to be abstract truth that they fail to calculate its practical consequences. The Germans can furnish you with a really friendly audience whose judgment, sooner or later, will produce profound reverberations in France. . . ."

But the consolation Tocqueville offered served only to send their controversy into another phase. While condemning the effects of the Second Empire upon French intellectual life, Tocqueville had mentioned the support given by the Roman Catholic Church to Napoleon III in return for his concessions to Catholic schools and for his active discouragement of anti-clericalism. The atmosphere created thereby further diminished the chances that Gobineau's work might receive a friendly reception in France—or so Tocqueville assumed. For to him it seemed obvious that Gobineau's theories, despite their occasional concessions to the Church, could not be squared with its teachings.

TOCQUEVILLE TO GOBINEAU

Tocqueville, Manche
July 30, 1856

"Surely you are not unaware of how devout we have become here in France. Every day my

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village curé in his sermons cites as an example to us the Christian virtues of the Emperor, his faith, his charity, and all the rest. . . . While in fact we now concern ourselves exclusively with material pleasures, we are said to be advancing daily along the path of saintliness. I assure you that Merimée himself, who boasts in private of never having been baptized, would not dare to praise publicly such doctrines as yours. For it must be said that although you bow occasionally in the direction of the Church, the very premises of your system are hostile to it. No doubt your great effort to remain within the bounds of Catholicism is made in good faith. But almost every conclusion that can be deduced from your ideas is to some extent incompatible with the Church's doctrine."

Gobineau responded angrily. How easily his critics allowed themselves the liberty of personal attacks upon him! The reviewers of his *Essay* had accused him of being everything from a disguised Jesuit to an extreme materialist. Now his old friend charged him with advancing opinions incompatible with his beloved religion.

GOBINEAU TO TOCQUEVILLE

Teheran
November 29, 1856

". . . no, if I say that I am a Catholic, that is what I am. To the ultimate degree of perfection? Certainly not. But I regret my deficiencies while aspiring to a more nearly perfect condition. And when I say 'Catholic' I mean utterly and completely, both in my heart and in my mind. I should abandon immediately my view of history if I shared your belief that it could not be reconciled with Catholic doctrine.

"It is true that once I was a Hegelian and an atheist. . . . But once M. de Rémusat . . . said to me, 'you are certainly a characteristic product of your century. Although you believe in the principles of feudalism, nevertheless you oppose Christianity.' Struck by this observation so just in its irony, I often reflected upon it. Not that I consider myself to be a systematic thinker of importance. To me, system has never seemed an essential part of human perfection. But I do not like the feeling of adhering to principles which are shockingly inconsistent with one another. Thus I had to make a choice. Either I must abandon my view of feudalism, or cease believing in Feuerbach and others like him because their political views horrified me. For I believe that the liberties which existed under feudalism have been calumniated and misunderstood by later generations which had become unworthy to enjoy these liberties. This is my first point.

"Secondly: when I saw revolution no longer as an abstract idea, but with my own eyes, the sight of all those men in dirty blouses so disgusted me, so sharpened my sense of what was true and just that, had I not been already married, I would have been capable of becoming a monk simply to assert my opposition. And that was only the beginning. A life of action gradually pushed me further along the road of belief; my stay in Asia completed the process. Here one resorts to prayer throughout the day, for life is not without its dangers. . . . And thus it is that I am most sincerely, and completely, and profoundly Catholic."

HERE is how Tocqueville answered Gobineau's protestations about being a good Catholic.

TOCQUEVILLE TO GOBINEAU

Tocqueville, Manche
January 14, 1857

". . . No, my dear friend, calm yourself. I know you too well to take you for a hypocrite. . . . I believe you to be one of those—as numerous today as in the ages of faith—who, despite feelings of veneration and a sort of filial tenderness towards Christianity, yet remain, unfortunately, not absolutely convinced believers. A soul in this condition does not believe itself to be hypocritical when it pays every respect to a religion so benevolent and holy. . . . It is among such villains that I have placed you. Forgive me. But I cannot believe that you do not realize the difficulties involved in reconciling your theories with either the letter or the spirit of Christianity. As for the letter—what is taught in Genesis if not the unity of mankind, its common descent from the same man? As for the spirit of Christianity—surely its distinctive quality is the desire to abolish all the racial distinctions still preserved in Judaism. Thus Christianity treats all men as belonging to a single family whose members are equally capable of improving themselves. How can this spirit, as commonly understood by Christians, be reconciled with a philosophy of history which describes races as distinct and unequal in understanding, judgment, and behavior?

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And this inequality is attributed to unalterable and inborn predispositions which make it impossible for certain races ever to hope to improve themselves. Christianity considers all men as brothers and equals. Your theory regards them as cousins whose common ancestor is to be found only in heaven. Here on earth, there are but conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves by right of birth.

"All this is so true that your doctrine is approved, cited, annotated—by whom? By the owners of Negroes, by all those who favor eternal servitude and justify it by the theory of racial inequality. I know that in the Southern part of the United States there are clergymen (nevertheless, slave owners) who preach from their pulpits doctrines similar to your own.

But you can be certain that the majority of Christians who are uninfluenced by this kind of self-interest will show not the slightest sympathy for your teachings. . . . I must say that reading your book has left me with doubts about the solidity of your faith. . . . You tell me that in this I am mistaken, that you have become an absolutely convinced Christian. May Heaven hear you! . . ."

Years after Tocqueville's death, his doubts were confirmed. Gobineau abandoned Catholicism and in all seriousness began to worship the old pagan gods of the Vikings. And in his last book, he actually attempted to trace his ancestry back to Ottar Jarl, a Norwegian pirate settled in Normandy who had been a member of a royal race that claimed to be descended from Odin.

THEIR sharp disagreement about the religious implications of Gobineau's doctrine led on to further differences that ended all serious discussion between the two men. The same letter that had brought Gobineau's declaration of faith acknowledged receipt of his friend's latest book, the *Ancien Régime*.

There Tocqueville had written, in defiance of the censorship, that his love of liberty would no doubt seem old-fashioned in the France of that day, whose rulers denied that free political institutions were practicable. Yet, Tocqueville had written, even the most ruthless dictator cherishes freedom, if only for himself. And so it is only his contempt for his fellows as unworthy of liberty that leads him to deny it to all but himself. "Thus a man's respect for absolute government is in direct proportion to his contempt for his fellow countrymen."

This remark Gobineau took to be directed at himself. He replied with a savage outburst. Yes, he despised France. It was corrupt to the core; its inhabitants neither wished nor deserved political freedom. This degenerate rabble could be controlled only by a dictatorship. True political freedom had existed only under the decentralized feudal institutions founded and maintained by pure "Aryans." As "Aryan" blood became tainted by intermarriage, feudalism had begun to give way to a centralized state. This trend, starting in the 14th century with Philip the Fair, was pushed by all subsequent rulers of France—French kings, revolutionary governments, and Napoleon. Thus for the past five hundred years France had had the same regime under different names. Since despotism was inevitable, the only question remaining was who was to be the despot.

Rational discussion, in politics as in ethics, can be fruitful only on the basis of a common set of values. Gobineau had made it more than evident that no such consensus existed between him and Tocqueville. Gobineau could not think well of himself without despising his countrymen. His opinion that a despotic dictatorship was the best possible government for France served to justify his activity as a diplomat of the Second Empire. But even so —what could loyalty mean in so debased a period? As a young man Gobineau had already made his decision. "A pure *condottière*, who desires to be nothing more, I shall make my choice when the time comes and follow whoever offers me the greatest advantages. For my part, I shall serve faithfully for the length of my enlistment." In his belief that all was justified once God was dead, that faithful service was the only obligation of an honorable man in a dishonorable state, Gobineau anticipated the German generals who served Hitler so faithfully.

In a letter remarkable both for its biting irony and its moral elevation, Tocqueville replied to Gobineau's letter of November 29, 1856, by forbidding him ever again to discuss his political opinions in their correspondence. Tocqueville's words showed how a man of alert intelligence and real moral sensibility was able to grasp the implications of the theory of racial inequality long years before the world had a chance to view the consequences of acting upon it.

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TOCQUEVILLE TO GOBINEAU

Tocqueville, Manche
January 24, 1857

"I must ask you, my dear friend, to abstain from any further discussion of your political opinions. Unable to enjoy the liberty that existed five hundred years ago, you prefer to have none at all. Fearing the despotism of political parties, under which one can at least defend one's dignity and independence with the spoken and written word, you prefer to be oppressed by a single individual against whom no one, not even you, can whisper a word. Again, so be it. There is no arguing about tastes. . . . Seriously what can come from political discussions between us? We belong to worlds that are diametrically opposed. Thus neither of us can hope to convince the other. Serious matters and new ideas must not be discussed by friends who cannot be expected to agree. Each of us is perfectly logical within his own mode of thought. You find our contemporaries to be overgrown children who are as degenerate as they are poorly brought up. Therefore you approve of their being manipulated by shows, by rumor, by tinsel, by the beautiful brocade of superb uniforms which so often turn out to be nothing but servants' livery. Like you, I believe that our contemporaries are poorly brought up and that this is the principal cause of their suffering and weakness. But I believe that the damage done by a bad upbringing can be repaired by providing them with a better one. And I believe that this is a task which we must not dare to abandon. I believe that, as with all men, part of them can still be influenced by a well-directed appeal to their natural honesty and good sense. In short, I wish to treat them as men. Perhaps I am wrong. But in any case, I am the product of my principles and increasingly I feel a profound pleasure in following them.

"You have a profound contempt for the human species, at least our branch of it; you consider it as fallen and incapable of ever rising again. Its very nature condemns it to servitude. Thus, to maintain the necessary minimum of order among this rabble, government by saber and club appears highly desirable to you. Nevertheless, I can scarcely think that you would expose your own back to the whip as a personal testimonial to your principles. As for myself, I feel that I have neither the right nor the inclination to consider my race and my country in this light. I see no necessity to despair of them. In my eyes, human societies are like individual human beings in that their acts have significance only when they are free. That a regime of liberty is more difficult to found and maintain in democratic societies like our own than in certain aristocratic societies that have existed in the past—this I myself always have maintained. But that liberty is now impossible—this is a proposition that I shall never be bold enough to consider. Even if despair were the necessary preliminary to achieving liberty, I should beg God not to make me believe this.

"No, I shall never believe that the human species, which stands at the head of created things, has become that debased herd which you make it out to be; that nothing is left for us except to give ourselves over, without any hope of a better future and without any reservations, to a small number of shepherds, who, after all, are no better animals than ourselves, and often are worse. Permit me to have less confidence in you than in the goodness and justice of God. . . ."

Gobineau wrote in reply: ". . . you have answered my reasoned arguments with six pages of irony. I must conclude that you are not interested in considering these matters further. Let us leave them, then, and speak of other things." From then on he wrote to Tocqueville of the picturesque scenes he saw about him in Persia, and Tocqueville answered in kind until his death two years later.

Seen in the perspective of our century, it was not Tocqueville but Gobineau who had the greater subsequent effect. The genealogy of National Socialist racial theory is clear. Gobineau took up race thinking in the crude state it had been left in by Boulainvilliers and other forgotten 18th-century French publicists, and converted it into a modern ideology. He incorporated in it all the ingredients necessary to its future success: a "scientific" vocabulary, biological concepts, philosophical determinism, and that profound skepticism toward traditional beliefs, combined with the willful assertion of new prejudices, which Nietzsche was to call "the transvaluation of values." As Tocqueville had predicted, this heady mixture found acceptance in Germany, but not until an Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, had tailored Gobineau to the tastes of Wilhelminian Germany by adding anti-Semitism, identifying the late 19th-cen-

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tury German with Gobineau's "Aryan," and exchanging fatalism for an expansive Pan-Germanism. The further changes in detail introduced by Rosenberg and Hitler were slight: as Léon Poliakov has noted, the only innovations National Socialism made in racial theory lay in its ruthless determination to stop at nothing in making reality conform to it, and in the fearful techniques it devised.

IN FAIRNESS to Gobineau, certain distinctions must be made. He himself mourned a lost and irretrievable society, and located his utopia in the remote past. Far from offering any scheme for remaking the world by conquest and mass murder, he coldly insisted that mankind as a whole was suffering from a disease for which there were no remedies. Toward the mass of men, whatever their origin, he felt a degree of disgust matched only by Nietzsche's, and he shared the latter's contempt for the 19th-century Germans.

Let us then abandon that form of intellectual history which consists in passing *ex post facto* moral judgments. In this as in other matters, there is a grave danger that those who combat totalitarianism will emulate its practice of rewriting history for the sake of propaganda. Surely, we need all the intelligence and discrimination we can muster to understand why race thinking has had such an effect on the modern world. No part of the history of that kind of thinking is more ambiguous than Gobineau's role in its development. Here was an extremely idiosyncratic aristocrat who celebrated the anarchical freedom enjoyed by the feudal nobility and saw the great tragedy of European history in the revolutionary events which culminated in the nation-state. All movements that aroused the masses, led to revolution, and played upon nationalism were anathema to him. Had he been confronted by Nazi racial theory, he would have been able to reject both its propositions and its practical implications as quite different from his own. But had he persisted in defending the intellectual method of his *Essay*, he could not have consistently denied the Nazis their opportunity to derive the conclusions they themselves did. Implicit in Gobineau's thought were a style of historical myth-making, a theory of value, and a mode of reasoning that by its systematic abuse of logic showed the way for all subsequent racial theorists. For reasons he could no more foresee than Tocqueville, it turned out that just those features of Gobineau's system which rendered it impossible to take him seriously as a thinker were the ones that best served the purposes of totalitarian ideology.

Although Gobineau detested intellectuals, he was himself one, but of a peculiar sort, a frustrated aristocrat seeking intellectual revenge upon those who had destroyed his class. His perspective was that of a déclassé, and his insight into the processes of bourgeois and industrial society was from the angle of a class beaten down by that society. The latter's values: political liberty, hard work, careers open to talent, professional or technical expertise—all these he disdained. His own claim to power and position he based upon birth alone. But in 19th-century France birth was no longer decisive, and Gobineau could gain a hearing for his ideas only by using the language of science, or—what was even more popular in his century—that of pseudo-science. Wrenching out of context the traditional claim of the aristocracy that a man's place should be determined not by what he did but by what he was, Gobineau asserted that what a man was must be determined by his *race*—not by his *family*. It was this message, conceived out of the resentment of a declassed aristocrat, that so well served all those in Germany who were made to feel unwanted and insignificant by the aftermath of a lost war, inflation, and economic depression.

But the sentence of death Gobineau passed on the modern world has remained more cogent today than the National Socialist dream of reshaping it into a utopia for "Aryans." Time has filled the Tocqueville-Gobineau correspondence with retrospective ironies. Gobineau, despite his claim that history was ineluctably determined, did in fact affect its course, but in ways that confirmed Tocqueville's indictment of his intellectual method. Indeed, the brief remarks Tocqueville made on this point can hardly be bettered, and they apply to totalitarianism on the left just as much as to that on the right. "For my part, I detest these absolute systems which represent all the events of history as depending upon great first causes linked by the chain of fatality, and which, as it were, suppress men from the history of the human race. They seem narrow to my mind, under their pretense of broadness, and false beneath their air of mathematical exactness."

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Cozzens

To the Editor of Commentary:

May I ask you to be good enough to explain in your next issue what possessed you to use twenty-four columns of valuable space only to show that a novel is absolutely inferior?

Benjamin Abraham

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

This is to express my unqualified admiration for Dwight Macdonald's deadly accurate—and with all that, entirely fair and immensely funny—"By Cozzens Possessed" (January).

Mr. Macdonald could have gone a little further to explain why the book is successful: Cozzens' hero leads an essentially futile, meaningless, and, avowals to the contrary notwithstanding, valueless life. The author, however, suggests that his is the best of all possible lives, that tepidness (reason), squeamishness and coldness (fastidiousness), pedantry (learnedness), and callow suburban lewdness plus neurosis (love) make this a "life of reason." A most flattering presumption to his readers who thus are taught a way to rationalize their patterns to themselves. . . .

Ernest van den Haag

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Bravo to Commentary and Dwight Macdonald! For too many years now the deflation of pretentiousness and the exposure of pompous fakery has been confined to the pages of the less somnolent college quarterlies and the little, dissident periodicals. What a pleasure to find it once again in an influential monthly magazine. This kind of journalism constitutes a service to the literate public, as well as a warning to the critical brotherhood that Someone Is Watching Them after all.

Harvey Swados

Valley Cottage, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

I should like to congratulate you on being bold enough to print Dwight Macdonald's essay on Cozzens. Might I add one or two points.

First, "the literary quarterlies have not yet been heard from": this is largely true, but the *Yale Review* carried an early notice which was by no means favorable. . . . (There was also an adverse comment in December *Esquire's* "Best Fiction 1957" column.)

Second, "he had been writing serious novels for thirty years without ever having had a major success, either popular or *d'estime*." This theory of Cozzens' neglect, fostered in certain quarters for obvious chauvinist purposes, has just been taken at face value in England by Sir Charles Snow in the *Sunday Times* for December 8, 1957, and it should surely be corrected. I understand that prior to *By Love Possessed* three books by Cozzens were chosen by the Book of the Month Club and one awarded a Pulitzer Prize. If this is not "popular" success, I should like to know what is. . . .

On the other hand, Macdonald's points about the intolerably mannered style this author has chosen in *By Love Possessed* are very well made and correspond with my own views in the British *Books and Bookmen;* the book cannot be read by anybody sensitive to English or American prose. It is not a matter of the self-conscious importation of jargon (nol-pros, surplusage, deodant, so-holding) so much as a decayed reversion to the Jamesian cult of the periodic sentence, whereby the refined communicate by innuendo and certainty is vulgar.

Geoffrey Wagner

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I should like to express my gratitude to Dwight Macdonald and to Commentary for his article on Cozzens. I have always felt that an attack on a straw man is a waste of time, but as an attack on those who dance around him, the article is just right.

Charles Reznikoff

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have been waiting these six months for a review such as Dwight Macdonald's. He has said clearly, boldly, perceptively, and brilliantly what should have been said in the beginning. Thanks to him for a splendid job.

Paul Weiss

Yale University

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Dwight Macdonald's article on Cozzens is one of the best things I've read in a long time. My compliments.

Nora L. Magid

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was much taken with "By Cozzens Possessed". . . . [as] a study of the really staggering irrelevance and incompetence of the reviewers.

What was astonishing about the reviews (John Fischer's in *Harper's* was certainly the worst) was the absolute lack of any suggestion, anywhere, that the writers were instructed in even the rudiments of critical practice. . . . I have met several editors of the major publishing houses . . . and a couple of reviewers. What is common to many of them is an undefined feeling that to be involved with the world of books is somehow a good thing, a sign of intelligence and perception, and not without a kind of general social prestige. That the passing of editorial or critical judgment may involve more than the ability to read, I believe had not occurred to them, and the suggestion that this is so comes as a threat. . . .

I thought *Guard of Honor* was a fine novel.

Robert B. Brown

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was 190 and some pages in *By Love Possessed* when I came upon Dwight Macdonald's review in Commentary. . . . Now I know exactly what is the matter and I feel as grateful to him as to a physician for naming the malady. . . . The only good thing that came of [the book] was Macdonald's review. A copy should be sent to all the reviewers. . . . They owe us an apology.

Celia Salkin

Passaic, N. J.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have just read Dwight Macdonald's article "By Cozzens Possessed" and all I can say is Amen! Amen! At last a sane critical word has been spoken. . . .

Anonymous

Pasadena, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

Dwight Macdonald's annihilation of *By Love Possessed* in your January issue was an enterprise long overdue but I think he yielded, at times, to the temptation to grind some private axes. . . .

Mr. Macdonald's major premises for accounting for the book's extraordinary success seem valid, but his theory of a "revolt of the Middlebrow against the Highbrow" appears rather fanciful. Judging by the book's peculiar verbiage and style—so admirably analyzed by Mr. Macdonald—it would appear that the book signalizes the contrary: a revolt by the would-be Highbrow against the Middlebrow. . . .

Mr. Macdonald regards Cozzens as a champion of the anti-intellectual bourgeois, but the novelist is a singularly inappropriate choice for such a role. His deliberately "intellectualized" vocabulary, his snobbish disdain for faulty human beings, hardly qualify him for membership in the ranks of the Middlebrow.

Perhaps the problems of culture would be simpler if the concept of the Brow were discarded—or at least granted a needed vacation. Mr. Macdonald is not wrong when he catalogues the great contributions of the Highbrow in recent years. But the greatest art of all has, apparently, been All-Brow—ancient Greek tragedy, medieval and Renaissance painting, late 18th- and 19th-century music, and the plays of Shakespeare.

Albert Friedman

Brooklyn, N. Y.

To the Editor of Commentary:

With respect to Dwight Macdonald's recent piece on Cozzens' *By Love Possessed,* I should like to comment as a teacher of the law of trusts on the legal problem around which the final moral agony of Cozzens' hero-lawyer revolves. Tuttle and Winner are partners in the practice of law. Tuttle is the trustee of a number of trusts, some of which are charitable, with the duty to invest principal, pay the net income to the beneficiaries, and then (in the case of some) pay over principal at some future time to named persons. As a trustee Tuttle steals the funds of one of the trusts. To cover this up he steals from other trusts and, by juggling the funds and wisely investing, he manages to keep up some income payments and restore part of the principal. Penrose, who has since joined the firm, discovers the facts but remains silent for twelve years (during which time Tuttle's wrongs continue) in the belief that as an incoming partner he isn't liable for what he views as a past though continuing wrong. Winner then discovers the facts and decides not to expose the situation upon being advised by Penrose that the law is clear that he, Winner, is already liable for the losses and that the best chance of making the trusts whole is by letting Tuttle continue his present investment policies. Putting aside his personal motivations, to the extent Winner has acted on this advice, he has been misguided. Winner is not himself liable for the losses

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merely because he is Tuttle's law partner. So long as Tuttle's wrongful acts occur in his conduct as trustee, rather than in pursuing the firm's law business, Winner would be liable only if he were a co-trustee, and then only if he himself had committed some wrongful act (which does not appear to be the case). If, by some stretch, the acts of an individual trustee can be construed as being in the course of firm law business, then Penrose is wrong in believing he himself isn't liable. For he too will be liable for those acts since he became a partner which relate to different matters (e.g., the McCarthy estate) and cannot be considered part of the original wrong although the wrongdoer claims he is currently stealing to cover what he stole twenty years ago. The idea that the lost trust funds can be redeemed in the manner suggested is also unsound. For, so long as no money comes in from non-trust sources to replace the stolen principal, there will always be a loss to the trust beneficiaries. That is, if to replenish principal the trustee must take some of the cream off the income, he will be paying the beneficiaries less than what the trusts have earned; in other words, you cannot redeem your theft of principal by theft of income. Nor does the law recognize the defense that a rising stock market justifies a lowering moral standard—which is, perhaps, a common illusion among embezzlers. All of which leads me to conclude that Winner should have sought legal advice outside his own firm, for—as is often said—a man who represents himself has a fool for a client. The resolution of a hero's moral dilemma, to be significant, if not comprehensible, requires some realistic exploration by the author of his practical situation. Here, as elsewhere in the book, the law is used as a superficial, gratuitous, and rather meaningless (if not inaccurate) gloss on the commonplace and so we cannot say whether Penrose is bilking Winner, whether it is Winner's intellectual powers or moral probity that is failing him, etc. etc.

If I might move from my own area of expertness into Mr. Macdonald's, I would suggest that he was on the verge of a great discovery but, after putting the blocks together (from his dialectical kindergarten) he saw not what he had built—or if he did, I don't think he called it by its right name. He was not dealing with the corruption of the Novel of Resignation, he had discovered a new genre: Capitalist Realism. It drinks from the same well of turgid and opaque and sentimental prose as its brother, Socialist Realism. It confirms the eternal justice of the System, and, as he so wisely pointed out, actually confounds the System with Life. Is not Cozzens' book the testament of the Eisenhower era where men who fail in public trust, often out of disguised self-interest or ignorance of the facts, save themselves (believing they are saving their souls, and ours as well) with vacuities that cover such simple virtues as class prejudice, abuse of position, and sanctimoniousness? Are we not, at last, in the presence of the Capitalist Saint?

Mr. Macdonald's article was excellent.

SAUL TOUSTER
University of Buffalo Law School
Buffalo, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The spectacle of a clever person being clever at someone else's expense can be amusing and even instructive. If the cleverness is directed at an object of love, it can be painful too. But cleverness that niggles at the defects (real or apparent) of wisdom is a spectacle only demeaning to the actor, and depressing for the observer. Dwight Macdonald's spitball attack on James Gould Cozzens and his critics seems to me just such a spectacle.

There is no need to recapitulate the critics' verdict on *By Love Possessed*. Macdonald deals with it by insulting his most vigorous opponents and shaking his head over the lesser ones. "It's all very puzzling," he says. Taste is, after all, an individual matter.

But there is need to set the record straight, since Macdonald's criticisms, even on their own terms, tend to overlook some of the facts necessary to complete the picture:

1. Macdonald asserts that Cozzens' hero, Arthur Winner, is a prig. To demonstrate this proposition he quotes Winner's stiff refusal to discuss questions of faith with a well-meaning, but stupid, Catholic lady. But he ignores Winner's unhesitating painful admissions to himself that his witless interlocutor has caught him out in matters of faith as well as morals. "A prig," says Macdonald, "is one who delights in demonstrating his superiority on small occasions." Only by major omissions can Macdonald claim for Winner the superiority that Cozzens never allows Winner to claim for himself.

2. Macdonald maintains that Cozzens' characters speak brutally, particularly to women. His first example is "an elderly lawyer, civilly asked by a client to make some change in the investing of her trust fund," who tells her she's getting senile. There is no indication that the lawyer's partner (the lady's nephew) then explains at some length the series of irritations that produced this exasperated reaction in a man who had, under any circumstances, almost the license of a relative.

3. Macdonald finds no adequate motivation

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for Arthur Winner's sleeping with his neighbor's wife. "The only reason given," he says, "is that she was there." And he supports this assertion with an observation by the cuckolded husband that "few men of normal potency prove able to refrain their feet from that path," an observation that Macdonald characterizes as "adolescent." But when the passage is examined in context, it turns out that the husband is saying that his wife has an extraordinary—a pathological—capacity to arouse sexual fury.

4. Macdonald objects to Cozzens' style on the ground, among others, that "he has no ear for speech at all," and as a horrible example he quotes "I'm now in a fettle fine. . . ." It makes some difference that the words represented by the ellipses make the quoted sentence read: "I'm now in fettle fine enough to declare what I've long known but usually think it unadvisable to say . . ." and that the speaker is afflicted with permanent paralysis. The indefinite article in the first quotation is gratuitously supplied by Macdonald.

These examples must suffice to indicate the disparity between what the record shows and what Macdonald reports. A vexing question remains: Why this vicious attack on a novel that speaks no more than the truth? That the truth can be painful is only a partial answer. The truth of *By Love Possessed* is particularly painful because it denies the possibility of salvation through any leap of love or faith. In their place it offers only the austere satisfactions of responsibility, coupled with the "knowledge of necessity" that Cozzens says is freedom. The symbol of that responsibility for Cozzens is the law. Significantly, it is Cozzens' concept of the law that particularly arouses Macdonald's ire. For Macdonald, the law is "an intellectual discipline, like mathematics or crossword puzzles."

But for Cozzens the law is, and has been through his last three novels, the highest human effort to act responsibly in an imperfectible world. This is so for two chief reasons: the law cannot refuse decision, within the prescribed sphere of its authority; and the law must always offer reasons, even when it knows the reasons to be inadequate. It is this fusion of sensibility and responsibility that burdens and sustains Arthur Winner, and, perhaps, his creator. For Macdonald, it is apparently too great a burden.

ADAM YARMOLINSKY

Washington, D. C.

MR. MACDONALD *writes:*

1. The worst kind of prigs are the ones who affect humility. And what about the other two instances?

2. A gentleman, which is what Cozzens' lawyer is supposed to be, doesn't call even a female relative senile just because he's had a hard day. And what about the doctor?

3. "A pathological capacity to arouse sexual fury"—an interesting new concept in psychiatry, by the way—must meet some pathological weakness in the male. But, as I observed in the article, if Winner had had this, then he would have had many more than one affair in his life. Or does Mr. Yarmolinsky believe that Marjorie was able to arouse the beast in *every* male? If so, she is a character for science, not serious fiction.

4. Good Lord, is this the only counterpoint my critic can make to the dozens of examples of barbarous writing I gave? I don't see why the speaker's being paralyzed makes him use pompous and literary language—should think rather the reverse, he'd want to save his energies. The indefinite article was supplied by the printer, not by my ms.

It wasn't the truth I found painful in *By Love Possessed,* it was the lack of both truth and beauty. As for "the fusion of sensibility and responsibility that burdens and sustains" that Episcopalian zombie, Arthur Winner, I think that in his boyhood (if one can imagine him having had one) he must have read and profited by Belloc's Cautionary Verse about the little boy who ran away from his nurse in Regent's Park zoo and was eaten by a lion. Especially the concluding lines:

His father, who was self-controlled,
Bade all the children round attend
To James' miserable end,
And always keep ahold of nurse
For fear of finding something worse.

I find Mr. Yarmolinsky's *obiter dicta* on the law incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial. Appeal dismissed, with costs to the defendant.

Christian Teaching and Anti-Semitism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . James Brown ("Christian Teaching and Anti-Semitism," December 1957) appears optimistic that modern Christian scholarship will do much toward removing the stigma attached to the word "Pharisee." Since, however, the New Testament makes its attitude very clear, I question that great progress will be made. It would mean, on the part of the Christian clergymen and seminary teachers especially, branding the New Testament account as false; or at least, as incorrect. This is not likely to happen.

How many Christian clergymen are familiar

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with the research of the last generation in this area? Few, in my experience, and of those few who are, how many will stand in a pulpit and take issue with statements in the New Testament? I have had occasion to speak with a number of students from two Christian theological seminaries in the vicinity and not one ever heard of R. Travers Herford, George Foote Moore, or James Parkes; certainly not of Lauterbach or Finkelstein or Klausner. The Fundamentalist schools will not change.

I have little doubt that Christian-Jewish relationships would improve considerably if the Crucifixion were presented in proper perspective, or if the Pharisees were properly presented. As to the likelihood, however, I have much doubt. That would occasion a virtual revolution.

(Rabbi) Norman H. Diamond
Springfield, Ohio

To the Editor of Commentary:

I refer to the article by James Brown and in particular to his views that the destruction of Jerusalem is evidence of divine justice or wrath, and so forth. The author refutes these opinions. The best refutation, however, is found in the *Chronica* of the Presbyter Sulpicius Severus who was a native of Aquitania (southern France) and lived c. 360-406.

Christianity has to share the blame for the loss of the remnant of Jewish statehood and for the enmity of the Roman authorities and writers during the critical period of the first century.

In that *Chronica* we find a lost portion of of Tacitus' narrative about the capture and destruction of the "famous city." Sulpicius Severus maintains against Flavius Josephus that the destruction of the Temple was by no means contrary to the decision of the Roman council of war.

Sulpicius Severus leads us directly into the tent of the Roman general staff. Some were for the preservation of the Temple which surpassed all works of man, but others took the standpoint that the Christians had sprung from the Jews; if the root was removed, the trunk would soon perish.

From this we can conclude that the leading political idea was merciless war against Christian upheavals, and against the Jews only as the root of Christianity. Thus the Romans held the Jews responsible for the Christian fanatics, and so it is Christianity that was responsible, historically, for the gloomy fate that overtook the Jews as a nation—and its responsibility goes back to a much earlier date than usually assumed.

Let us not forget in this connection what Suetonius wrote about the Emperor Claudius' reason for expelling the Jews from Rome: instigated by Christus, the Jews rioted incessantly.

William Siegel
New York City

Mr. Brown *writes:*

Rabbi Diamond's letter seems to underline my point that the New Testament treatment of the Pharisees is a complicated matter for the Christian. There *was* a real point at issue, and the Gospel evidence cannot simply be regarded as *tendenz*. Nor is it as clearly one-sided as he seems to think: while it certainly condemns some of the Pharisees (though hardly in severer terms than does the Talmud itself in *Sotah* 22b, etc. etc.), it also records many acts of kindness on their part toward Jesus and the Apostles (e.g. Mark 1:28; Luke 13:31; Acts 5:34), and it also records Jesus' blessing on the scribe who quoted him the text from Deut. 6:4-5 which was the driving force behind the whole range of Pharisaic spirituality.

It is of course true that the whole picture has not often been presented. But, with a larger acquaintance with theological students and clergymen than is perhaps possible for Rabbi Diamond, I think we can continue to be optimistic about the long-term effects of the newer expositions of Rabbinic Judaism. Nearly twenty years ago now, when I first began to study these things, together with my contemporaries I was directed to the works of Moore, Herford, Klausner, and Abrahams. I would agree that these works have not yet been assimilated to the degree that they universally affect the teaching given in school and pulpit, but that they are doing so, I have no doubt. The insights gained from them may be found on every page of the most recent New Testament commentaries.

As for Mr. Siegel, it is true that the passage from Sulpicius is frequently, but by no means universally, assumed to be from a lost section of Tacitus' *Historia* (the latest discussion I have read regards it as unproven in default of further documentary evidence), but will it in any case bear the weight he puts upon it? Does it really do any more than recognize the Jewish origins of Christianity, and the belief that, as a "Jewish superstition," it would suffer with its parent faith if the Temple were destroyed? Then the text of Suetonius reads "Chresto" which *may* be identified with Christ, but the opinion of historians seems to be that the statement is too vague to bear any weight; the name of Chrestus or Christus may have been bandied about and assumed to be the person who was stirring up the trouble.

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"The Fabric of Society"

To the Editors of Commentary:

We appreciate Dennis Wrong's good opinion of *The Fabric of Society*, as stated in his review in the December Commentary, but we should like to correct some factual errors.

Contrary to his impression, we share Mr. Wrong's doubts about the possibility of a unified social science. We make that clear in the Introduction and later in the text (e.g., page 1 and page 246).

We did not try to *settle* "issues of psychological theory" by "theological metaphors." But we pointed out at length that the issues in question cannot be settled because they are not genuine psychological issues—and we traced them to their theological sources. We do not believe that either neo-Freudian or Freudian theories have yet been formulated in sufficiently concrete empirical terms. Calling attention to this, we confined ourselves to a basic exposition stressing the inconclusiveness of the evidence. We thought that exposition necessary, simply because our readers should understand an immensely influential theory.

It is true that Professor Machlup, whose article we reprinted, presents a purely deductive argument. That is why we supplemented it with empirical evidence (e.g., pp. 510-514 and the whole previous chapter), which Mr. Wrong somehow overlooked. We reached the conclusion that trade unions fulfill a useful *social* function. But we did not find respectable material to rebut Machlup's *economic* conclusions.

Nowhere do we assert or imply that Stalinism is the "inevitable embodiment" of Marxism. Unlike Marxists, we do not believe in historical inevitability. But, unlike Khrushchev, we think that Stalinism was due to more than Stalin. We treat Soviet totalitarianism as one of the *possible* developments of Marxism, no less logical a development than social democracy. (In fact, the more democratic socialists are, the less Marxist.) We have been careful throughout to distinguish Communism from Socialism.

It is disturbing that Mr. Wrong ignores our justification of the "intellectual urgency" of analyzing Marxism in a book addressed to Americans. Much of the world's population lives within Marxist systems and many additional millions in Europe and Asia are strongly influenced by Marxism. Should Americans be ignorant of Marxism, then, simply because it is not urgent (i.e. popular) here? Should they be unprepared—as Mr. Eisenhower was when he met Zhukov—for Marxist arguments? Further, such American ideas as "poverty breeds Communism" are Marxist ideas (as well as false ones), even if their proponents do not know it.

Although we do not agree with all of Mr. Wrong's interpretations, we are grateful for his care and thoroughness. But, whatever the defects of our book, we do not think it has the defects, factually, that Mr. Wrong believes.

Ralph Ross
Ernest van den Haag

New York City

Mr. Wrong *writes*:

1. On pages 1 and 246 Messrs. Ross and van den Haag merely state that a unified social science does not *at present* exist.

2. Of course Messrs. Ross and van den Haag do not invoke theology to decide the numerous and varied disputes between Freudians and neo-Freudians, nor did I accuse them of doing so. But when they are less than fair to neo-Freudian views while giving the benefit of every doubt to Freudian conceptions, the passage in which they associate the former with Pelagius and the latter with St. Augustine strikes one as an effort to preempt for psychoanalytic orthodoxy the prestige attached to Christian orthodoxy in many contemporary intellectual circles.

I cannot agree with their claim that they confine themselves to a straightforward exposition of Freudian and neo-Freudian theories "stressing the inconclusiveness of the evidence." One example: on pages 30-31 they summarize Freud's well-known view of the Oedipus complex as the source of culture and, much more briefly, the objections to it raised by "some cultural anthropologists." Virtually *all* cultural anthropologists, however, and many psychoanalysts as well reject the thesis of *Totem and Taboo*. Freud's theory of culture, Messrs. Ross and van den Haag conclude, is a "bold speculation" of great "explanatory value" although the evidence for it "is not likely ever to stand up in criminal courts." The authors next review in three sentences the criticism of Freud's views by Malinowski, which, unlike *Totem and Taboo*, was based on close empirical observation of a non-Western culture. Several alternative explanations of Malinowski's findings which are more consistent with Freud's thesis are then suggested and Malinowski's understanding of psychoanalysis is questioned. The authors conclude that "the anthropological evidence can hardly be said to have disproved Freud's views." Whether they again mean disproved by the somewhat artificial standards of criminal courts is not specified.

3. I still doubt that Professor Machlup's article, reprinted from a U. S. Chamber of Commerce pamphlet, adequately represents the

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views of economists. Messrs. Ross and van den Haag themselves concede this on page 511 of their book.

4. I did not argue that social democracy was the "logical" outcome of Marxism. I doubt that it is ever legitimate to regard large-scale historical processes as "logical developments" of ideas. And neither in their book nor in their letter do Messrs. Ross and van den Haag clearly discriminate between Marx's ideas and the Kremlin's debased versions of them. Surely this century has taught us that any system of ideas, except perhaps other-worldly religions, is capable of being corrupted to serve as the ideology of a totalitarian movement.

I certainly do not think that Americans can afford to be ignorant of Soviet ideology. Messrs. Ross and van den Haag, however, go out of their way to inject sideswipes at "Marxism" into their text and such a procedure hardly seems justified, even as an intellectual hygiene, by the present state of American opinion. Nor do I find anything specifically Marxist about the slogan "poverty breeds Communism." One could, I suppose, call it a "vulgar-Marxist" notion, but it finds little support in Marx's writings and is used by many people who, knowingly or unknowingly, have not been exposed to Marxist thinking. Crude forms of economic determinism which attribute all social evils to poverty abound in modern thought and popular belief, some of them antedating Marxism and others uninfluenced by it.

Since this is the second time in recent months that I have been moved to censure sweeping and indiscriminate condemnations of Marxism, let me hereby swear on the collected works of Max Weber that I am not now and never have been, either politically or intellectually, a Marxist. But like Weber, Joseph Schumpeter, Hannah Arendt, and other critics of Marxism who have influenced my thinking, I have never doubted that Marx was a great and important thinker to whom we all owe intellectual debts.

Nasser's Egypt

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "The Social Roots of Nasser's Egypt" (November) Mr. A. V. Sherman attempts to show that the present Egyptian leaders are interested in personal power rather than in the welfare of their country, and that "their only claim to eminence is their nationalism and their anti-Westernism." Unfortunately many of his statements lack the support of evidence.

Thus he asserts that the junta is supported by a new and greatly inflated bureaucracy, the expansion of which it has made no attempt to control; but he fails to give figures or to mention the source of his information. In fact a Civil Service Commission, functioning with the assistance of UN advisers, has been set up to provide precisely such controls.

Describing the economic problems facing the junta in 1952, Mr. Sherman states that "Egypt's main problem in this area was not inequitable distribution of land"—a surprising assertion, since two thousand Egyptians between them owned 20 per cent of the cultivated land, while two million others owned 13 per cent of it, supporting their families by the produce of one acre or less. According to Mr. Sherman, the real problems were undercapitalized agriculture and rural over-population.

The first was no real problem: many of the old estates were highly capitalized and efficiently farmed, and continued thus under collective ownership. What little could be done to increase production per acre by means of perennial irrigation, better seed, and more fertilizers was largely effected. The second problem was admittedly serious, but it too was tackled by the Egyptian government. One method was to bring new land under cultivation—in Tahrir province, where by 1956, 5,000 acres were already being cultivated and 5,000 more being reclaimed, and in Buhaira, where the Egyptian-American Rural Improvement Service has reclaimed 25,000 acres. Expropriated landowners have been compensated in bonds which they could use, and in some cases were encouraged to use, to purchase uncultivated land for reclamation.

Another method was to encourage industry: Mr. Sherman is premature in dismissing the government's industrial projects as "futile and expensive," since some are only now nearing completion and others will not be ready for some years.

Does Mr. Sherman really believe that Colonel Nasser's arguments against imperialism are inspired by Moscow? They have been voiced by every Egyptian nationalist from 1882 onwards, including the fathers and grandfathers of that middle-class intelligentsia which, according to Mr. Sherman, Nasser is now seeking to impress. The only recent concept to emerge in Egyptian politics—neutralism—is hardly likely to have emanated from Moscow.

Louise Roper

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Mr. Sherman *writes:*

The main source on economic and statistical matters is the official or "approved" press, in particular the *Economic Bulletins of the National Bank of Egypt* (quarterly), and the

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Economic and Political Review. For the numbers of civil servants, see also Morroe Berger's *Bureaucracy and Society in Modern Egypt*. I cited examples of new government functions which employ large numbers of personnel, many of whom were not formerly civil servants; they include the vastly extended broadcasting services to the Arab world outside Egypt, to Africa and Asia; the National Planning Commission, the National Guidance Ministry, the several hundred officers seconded to non-military "commissar" posts (at the same time as the total strength of the army and its budget increased). As the NBE Bulletin (No. 1, 1957) notes, the "increasing importance of the public sector of the economy is shown by the increase in the budget to 280 million Egyptian pounds in 1956-57, from 238 million pounds in 1955-56." Since expenditure on development projects was some £E 8 million less in the 1956-57 budget, while salaries account for some 45-50 per cent of the rest of the budget (see Berger) the inference is obvious.

The fact that landownership in Egypt is "inequitable" does not necessarily make it the main problem from the economic or social point of view. The average holding in 1950 was very small (2.2 acres) and the size of the average farm was already too low—6.1 acres. Since then it has declined to 5.0 acres. The proposed land reform at its early maximum could never have affected more than 10 per cent of all holdings; in fact it has bogged down at 5-6 per cent. But now too, the Egyptian press has admitted that the Liberation Province scheme has proved a costly failure. Those people whose interest in and sympathy for Egypt dates back only to its acquisition of a dictator might do well to study its previous experience: the crop area rose from 7.7 million acres in 1912 to 8.5 million in 1938 and 9.2 million in 1948. The 1950-75 plan aimed at more than 2 million acres more in reclamation and conversion, so that Nasser's schemes, even were they to succeed in full, would testify more to his talent for making a lot of noise than to his ability to outdo the old regime.

As for industry, it is legitimate to describe as "futile and expensive" projects which lock up large amounts of capital for schemes which have no hope of being profitable at world prices, but serve propaganda and psychological aims instead of economic ones. It is the nature of long-term economic project planning that it can be assessed in its major outlines before it is executed; that in fact is the meaning of long-term planning.

I did not say that Nasser's arguments against imperialism were "inspired" by Moscow. On the contrary, I stressed that Nasser and his generation have always been strongly anti-Western, and that their new range of arguments against the West (including America, which Mrs. Roper should agree has never oppressed the Egyptians) are meant to "explain" their anti-Westernism to their more sophisticated citizens and to non-Moslems abroad. If Mrs. Roper had studied samples of the kind of anti-British or anti-American material prepared in Arabic for local consumption, she might find it easier to see what I am writing about.

The Leninist thesis presenting imperialism as a necessary result of monopoly capitalism, and the Zhdanov thesis of the West's inevitably aggressive designs against the "world of socialism," are, however, new importations. As to whether neutralism "is hardly likely to have emanated from Moscow," an answer is supplied in *El Gumhuriya*, Nasser's own paper, October 8, 1957:

"Will Sputnik convince the U.S. that it must stop threatening the peace of the world? We correctly assessed the difference between Russian friendship and Dullesite impudence even before Sputnik made its appearance. Russia is a peace-loving country which hates war and defends the peoples that are exploited by the monopolistic and imperialist gangs."

More on Northrup

To the Editor of Commentary:

Evelyn N. Rossman's essay, "Judaism in Northrup," in the November issue of Commentary calls to mind the caution expressed by Bertrand Russell (in *Authority and The Individual*) against "the habit of looking upon a society as a systematic whole . . . a planned organism with parts neatly dovetailed into each other." Observers of American community life can attest that a certain amount of duplication, overlapping, and omission is endemic to the communal structure in our society. This is true for the general community and is certainly true for the Jewish community. This does not mean, however, that chaos must be the normal condition of community life.

As communities mature, they develop organizational systems which introduce planfulness in the establishment and conduct of voluntary services and which enable communication and cooperation among organizations in behalf of the common good. From Mrs. Rossman's description, Northrup has not grown up in this sense. Like other suburban communities with burgeoning populations, it has become a large city which still depends on the service equipment of the small community it once was.

Take, for example, its "Jewish community center" referred to more appropriately by Mrs.

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Rossman as a "center-temple." This is not a Jewish community center in the social agency sense, but is a synagogue-center. When Northrup's Jewish population was much, much smaller, a synagogue-center of this type may have been a suitable means of meeting the multiple requirements of the community—religious, educational, philanthropic, and social. Today, the scope of these services is obviously far beyond the ability of a synagogue-center, or any individual institution, to handle effectively. With few exceptions, in communities the size of Northrup, the Jewish community center (or YM-YWHA) concentrates on one, single important community task which is complex enough to require the full energies of the board and staff. This task is to provide a leisure-time program of cultural, social, recreational, and informal educational activities for Jewish individuals of all ages. Such centers are not identified with a particular synagogue or denominational body, but are a common meeting ground for all Jewish points of view. Like other social agencies, their programs are based on the needs of people and are served by trained personnel and are carefully planned and periodically evaluated to determine if they continue to fulfill their Jewish and civic purposes in light of changed conditions. The continuing dependence on a synagogue-center for Jewish community center and other services is evidence that Northrup is still embryonic in respect to its basic communal functions.

Furthermore, since no reference is made to a Jewish federation or other central instrument for over-all planning common to Jewish communities of its size, Northrup evidently does not yet have the means of answering the questions suggested by the author: "Why are we building this community? What do we want to accomplish?"

It is no wonder that the author should reflect an acute sense of frustration regarding the future of Northrup. Mrs. Rossman very properly does not want to "live a Jewish life submerged in trivialities." Her leadership talents could be profitably invested in helping Northrup to reappraise its communal machinery in terms of its present needs and its future growth. A sense of frustration is obviously no answer. The solution must begin with a frank recognition of the problems created by growth and a willingness to reappraise existing services in light of the changing needs of an increased population. Such a reappraisal can be inspiring experience for communal leadership.

HERBERT MILLMAN
Director of Field Service
National Jewish Welfare Board
New York City

MRS. ROSSMAN *writes:*

I wish that I could believe that Northrup's Jewish problems could be solved by changing its community organization. I don't doubt that a community council might be of help, and the recognition of such a need would alone be a sign of maturity. A YMHA program is not likely to be as appropriate in a small town as it is in a city, but it may some day be included in our activities.

Unfortunately, I see that organizations have only a small effect upon the people who join them. The people, however, have a great effect upon the organizations, which must inevitably reflect the confusions, the aggressions, the ignorance, as well as the high-mindedness of those who participate.

Organizational chaos is the least of the problems. It is unlikely that good taste, intelligence, charity, religious feeling, respect for educational and cultural activities will be voted in at a Jewish community council meeting. It is just as unlikely that intolerance, selfishness, ignorance, and vanity will be voted out.

This doesn't mean, however, that I've stopped hoping. Before I came to Northrup, I was a group worker. The Jewish Welfare Board has a record of my experience. I have made myself available to my community. I've taught in its school, led adult discussion groups, helped in many educational projects. What I know of Northrup has been learned by living in it and trying to help it. If I seem sad or frustrated, it is precisely because the experience has not been as "inspiring" as I hoped it would be.

Khazars and Karaites

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

According to the title of his article, "Origins of East European Jewry" (November 1957), Bernard D. Weinryb should have discussed the origins of East European Jewry, but apparently he intended only to disprove the contention that the bulk of East European Jewry is of Khazar descent. This one point he may or may not have proved. This is not the place to analyze all of Dr. Weinryb's arguments, but his statement that it may never be possible to say where Eastern Jewry came from would indicate that he was not convinced by his own deductions. I will touch only upon a few of these.

That Firkowich falsified various documents and inscriptions does not mean that no Khazar blood was incorporated into East European Jewry. Any reference to Jews in East Europe prior to the 13th century is minimized by Weinryb one way or another. Using his methods it would not be very difficult to prove

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that there were no Jews in the United States before the middle of the 19th century.

If Benjamin of Tudela does not mention the presence of Jews anywhere east of Prague, that would indicate to me that he did not know of any, but not that there were no Jews there. Benjamin could not be too reliable, in view of his repeating the story about the people of Slavonia selling their children to all nations.

The reference to Petachya is even more interesting. Weinryb himself felt the need of amending Petachya's statement about "no Jews, only Karaites" in the land of Kadar. In this connection I recall listening to a report of a Polish Jew who returned to Warsaw from a trip to Germany in 1913. According to him there were no Jews in Germany at the time. When his attention was called to actual cases, his reply was: "Are these Jews?" But Petachya does mention seeing at Baghdad ambassadors from people who had become Jews (see Dunlop's *History of the Jewish Khazars*).

Weinryb is right that the name Kozar may be derived from *Koza,* but it could also come from Khazar. As a matter of fact, it is more likely to have been derived from Khazar.

Nothing is more misleading than language and cultural heritage for tracing the origin of any people. There is no doubt that the culture of West European Jews who migrated to Poland was on a considerably higher level than the culture of those who came from the East, or who were already settled there for many generations. It was only a matter of time for most East European Jews to accept the culture of their co-religionists who came from the West. As for the language, I am sure I do not need to point out to Dr. Weinryb that at one time the German language played a very important role in Polish cities. It was a matter of convenience to adopt that language for general use.

JOSHUA SZECHTMAN

Byram, Connecticut

PROFESSOR WEINRYB *writes:*

Most of Mr. Szechtman's letter scarcely warrants any comment other than "please read the article. . . ." He either misquotes me, or lifts a thought out of its context.

1. I never said that the Karaites may not be descendants of the Khazars. The contrary is true. So the whole argument concerning amendment of Petachya's statement about Karaites and Jews, and the accompanying anecdote, are irrelevant (unless Mr. Szechtman does not realize that older Hebrew sources distinguished between Karaites and Jews).

2. Nor did I use language and cultural heritage as the sole criteria for tracing the origin of East European Jews. They are, rather, two among such other elements as external physical features, blood type, religious traditions, the privileges of the princes, names and inscriptions on tombstones, documentary evidence about some Jews in Silesia, etc.

In the main, Mr. Szechtman's arguments are further proof that in intellectual inquiry reasoning alone is not enough. In historiography, as in other branches of study, there are certain "rules of the game." One of these is that evidence should be critically appraised. Another requires that in cases where "testimony is unavailable or inadequate for a definite conclusion. . . . no definite answer be given." Mr. Szechtman takes my statement that since "documentary information . . . is extremely scant . . . it will probably never be easy [he misquotes this as "never be possible"] to say definitely from where the thousands of Jews came to Eastern Europe" in the 13th/14th century, as a sign that I was unconvinced of my deductions. This is not the case. . . . Again, a glance at the economic history of Poland would have convinced Mr. Szechtman that slavery existed there in the 12th/13th century, and thus there was no need to blame Benjamin of Tudela for saying so.

Consulting the text of Petachya (instead of secondary sources), Mr. Szechtman would have found that his story of the "Baghdad ambassadors" is not in the chapter where he tells of Baghdad and the Jews there, but in another which re-tells a number of legends (about the flying camel, the Baghdad gates which were taken from Jerusalem, Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat, the manna found there and Petachya's eating of it, etc.). Among these legends is also one concerning the conversion of the Khazars—which took place some four-hunderd years before Petachya's time. And it is in this connection that the "Baghdad ambassadors" are mentioned.

In examining the historical *sources* about East European Jewry (in connection with a forthcoming work) I found that the Khazar myth and similar theories have no basis in source materials. They are no more than fiction so far as history and historical evidence goes. There is, therefore, no basis for reasoning about assimilation of the earlier settlers, or for similarly arbitrary speculations.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Problem of Limited War*

GORDON A. CRAIG

SOME unsung genius in the Pacific theater during the Second World War wrote a piece of advice for Americans in troubled times which ran: *"When in danger,/when in doubt,/ Run in circles!/Scream and shout!"*

As one listened, in the first days after the launching of the Sputniks, to the bellows of Congressional consternation, the muddled and contradictory mouthings of White House aides and Pentagon bureaucrats, and the inevitable frantic attempts of party politicians to find scapegoats among their opponents, that bit of doggerel seemed all too appropriate. Unfortunately, it wasn't funny any longer.

There are some indications, thank heaven, that we have been so thoroughly alarmed by the Russian achievement that our efforts will not be entirely confined to circular motions and loud noises. It is reassuring to note, for instance, that, on the scientific front at least, some positive action has been taken; and it is reasonable to suppose that much more will be done in the near future to reduce what is now admitted to be a frightening Russian superiority in rocket development. What is less evident, at this moment of massive reappraisal, is an equal determination to do something about another dangerous weakness in our military posture, one which existed before the Sputniks and which, if the shock caused by them induces us to pour *all* our energies into rocket development, will become even more serious. This weakness arises from the fact that we are gradually losing, if we have not already lost, our ability to fight any kind of war but a total, all-out, thermonuclear one; and it is this weakness which in recent years has deprived our diplomacy of freedom of action and made our national strategy rigid and ineffective.

How did we come to this sorry pass? Both Henry Kissinger and Robert Osgood have concerned themselves with this problem, and they seem in general to agree that our initial mistake was to overestimate the political advantage of possessing the atomic bomb, and that, from this initial error, we gradually drifted into a dangerously exclusive dependence upon nuclear weapons. "We added the atomic bomb to our arsenal," Kissinger writes, "without integrating its implications into our thinking." We assumed that the possession of this terrible weapon would enable us to win any war that broke out, and we assumed further that general awareness of this would *prevent* any war from breaking out. Believing this, it was easy for us to persuade ourselves that there was no pressing need for conventional forces. National security would be protected by seeing to it that we got the biggest bang for every buck expended, and this meant spending our dollars on the atomic stockpile and on long-range aircraft, rather than on foot-soldiers—a commodity in which, we kept repeating, we could not hope to match the Soviet bloc anyway.

Even in the days when we possessed a monopoly of atomic weapons, this was a dangerous kind of thinking, for we never succeeded in fitting the bomb into our declared policy of repelling Communist aggression. Our possession of the bomb was certainly not successful in preventing the expansion of Soviet power in Central Europe. As Kissinger points out, Soviet propaganda alternately denied the effectiveness of atomic weapons and emphasized the moral iniquity of possessing, let alone using, them; and, while these tactics confused public

*A review of *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, by Henry A. Kissinger, Harper, for the Council on Foreign Relations, 455 pp., $5.00; and *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy*, by Robert Endicott Osgood, University of Chicago Press, 307 pp., $5.00.

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opinion in the non-Soviet world and, in some cases, caused our friends to view us with fear and suspicion, the Soviets calmly went about increasing and solidifying their European empire without effective interference by us.

This should have cast some doubt upon the deterrent ability of atomic bombs, but it did not. Even after the first Russian atomic explosions marked the beginning of the Soviet Union's rapid progress toward parity with us, we went on talking as if our atomic might would solve all power problems. Even after the Korean war had demonstrated how little truth there was in this, the habit persisted; Mr. Dulles's speech about massive retaliation was not, for instance, made until January 1954. And even after the fall of Indo-China had shown that no one in the Soviet bloc was paying much attention to Mr. Dulles any more, administration spokesmen clung to their faith in nuclear threats. "If the Communist leadership," Secretary Quarles said in June 1956, "were faced with the plain fact that the United States stood ready to use its best weapons to defend its vital interests, they would have to conclude that [either limited or total] aggression would be unprofitable."

In view of the historical record since 1945, these were hollow words. The crucial problem of strategy, as Kissinger has written, "is the relationship between power and the willingness to use it, between the physical and psychological components of national policy. Faced with the knowledge of the consequences of a thermonuclear war, policy-makers will be reluctant to engage in a strategy, the penalty for which may well be social disintegration." If it was true, as Osgood writes, that "it was hard to avoid the conclusion in the fall of 1956 that the United States was progressively losing its capacity to fight anything but the smallest police action or the largest nuclear conflict," it was also true, and still is, that the possibility of our choosing the latter course was, and is, remote, except in the case of a direct attack upon our own territory or that of our closest allies. Forced, in the case of other kinds of aggression, to choose between acquiescence in a result we do not like or acceptance of the responsibility for unleashing thermonuclear destruction, we will almost certainly acquiesce, although we may try—as we have tried before—to hide the true nature of our defeat behind a smokescreen of elaborate explanations.

If we are to escape from this embarrassing and dangerous position, we must—while maintaining atomic parity with the Russians—regain the capacity and the will to fight the kind of war we fought in Korea, although without the ambiguities that characterized that conflict. Both Osgood and Kissinger agree that we are going to have to be able and willing to fight limited wars—that is, wars which are fought for concrete, well-defined objectives, which do not involve the employment of what Secretary Quarles calls our "best weapons," and which are not intended to lead to the unconditional surrender of our opponent. The last point is very important, for, as Kissinger writes, "limited war is not a cheaper substitute for massive retaliation. . . . An attempt to reduce the enemy to impotence would remove the psychological balance which makes it profitable for both sides to keep the war limited." The ability to fight limited wars, in short, is not desirable as a means of satisfying an American craving for victory over Communism. It is meant rather to serve as another deterrent to Soviet aggression. It may not always work—that is, it may not always prevent the initiation or even the successful consummation of aggressive Soviet action—but it can be expected to increase the risks which the Soviets must calculate before they resort to even minor aggression, and, if it does nothing else, it will demonstrate that we no longer intend to rely solely on words to prevent brushfire wars or attacks upon the so-called "gray areas."

GRANTED the desirability of regaining the capacity to wage limited war, with what weapons shall we wage it? On this point, Kissinger plumps for limited *nuclear* war, arguing that, in any limited conflict between ourselves and the Soviet Union, we must use tactical nuclear weapons, because these weapons can be used effectively, without causing either excessive destruction or a gradual drift toward total war, and because we will be able to employ them more effectively than the Russians.

It is perhaps unwise to be quite as assured about these difficult questions as Kissinger is inclined to be. Take his statement that "a limited nuclear war would approach all-out war in destructiveness only if it should be conducted with the tactics of World War II, with fixed lines, massive attacks on communication centers and an attempt to wipe out the enemy industrial potential." Leaving aside the fact that World War II was not always conducted

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on fixed lines, how much confidence can we place in this prediction? No one has ever used tactical atomic weapons in war, and there are therefore no real experts on the subject. If we think of actual areas in which we might have to conduct limited war, however, it is hard to see how great destruction could be avoided. In Central Europe, for example, there are many cities, and they are very close together. Even if we assume, with Kissinger, that the tactical units employed will be small, there will certainly be enough of them to necessitate reliance on communication centers for supplies; and, once the supply lines are subjected to nuclear attack (of the kind forecast in the "Carte Blanche" tactical air maneuvers of 1955), what becomes of all those cities—and of Kissinger's argument? Moreover, once you start to interdict supply and to attack air bases with small bombs, what is to prevent a gradual drift toward the use of bigger ones?

Osgood also envisages the possibility of using tactical atomic weapons in limited war, but he is much less confident than Kissinger and much more worried by the tough questions which will have to be answered before their employment can be decided upon. "Can a war with tactical atomic weapons be limited?" he asks. "Can tactical targets be distinguished from strategic targets? What would be the political repercussions of initiating the use of these weapons in Asia . . . [or] depending upon them for the defense of Europe? Will they meet the problem of indirect aggression? Will they necessarily give us a military advantage if the enemy employs them also?" (Kissinger believes they will, because of our superiority in "leadership . . . personal initiative and mechanical aptitude, qualities more prevalent in our society than in the regimented system of the USSR"—a statement that is no longer as persuasive as it might have been when it was written, before the launching of the Sputniks.)

"Will they even," Osgood continues, "necessarily permit us to economize in numbers of ground troops or in total defense expenditures? . . . The very posing of these questions assumes that we shall plan the use of tactical atomic weapons as a means of deterring and fighting limited wars, not as a means of escaping the problem; but here we must pause to wonder whether the United States has yet confronted the problem of limited war with sufficient candor and clarity of purpose to give assurance that national strategy controls weapons rather than the other way around."

This is well said. One might add the point often made by James E. King, Jr., namely, that the difference between conventional and nuclear weapons is tolerably well understood, whereas the difference between tactical nuclear weapons and other nuclear weapons is not so clear. Until we are sure of the answers to Osgood's questions, we should not be too anxious to commit ourselves to the concept of limited nuclear war.

If we do not, therefore, follow Kissinger all the way, we can nevertheless follow him in his brilliant exposition of the necessity of finding a strategic doctrine which will restore flexibility to our national policy. No one who reads this book will experience much difficulty in agreeing with his statement that "limited war and the diplomacy appropriate to it provide a means to escape from the sterility of the quest for absolute peace which paralyzes by the vagueness of its hopes, and of the search for absolute victory which paralyzes by the vastness of its consequences." But what about the great American public which does not read books?

The possibility of our regaining the capacity to fight limited wars will depend, both Kissinger and Osgood agree, upon a public opinion that has been educated to the realities of the nuclear age. Neither author is exactly optimistic about the speedy success of such education. This nation has always had an ambivalent attitude toward war. Osgood speaks of a "confluence of pacifism and pugnacity" which makes Americans wish to avoid war as long as possible but, when it is forced upon them, to win it decisively. Kissinger writes of our impetuosity, of our constant craving for certainty and final solutions, and of our lack of tragic experience, which robs us of the kind of perspective needed in these dangerous days. That these are characteristic American traits is true, and it is also true that they make it difficult for Americans to understand the problems of an age in which total military victory is unthinkable, permanent solutions to our ideological conflicts unlikely, and the possibility of national tragedy very real. These qualities and others—the disinclination to think about unpleasant things, the preoccupation with material values, a tendency toward the kind of vulgar ostentation that consumes national resources in order to adorn our private

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automobiles with useless appendages, and what appears to be a growing moral flabbiness—will not be easy to overcome, but they must be overcome if our national strategy is to regain its effectiveness.

White Rose, Black Hangman

CONSCIENCE IN REVOLT. Sixty-Four Stories of Resistance in Germany 1933-45. By ANNEDORE LEBER. Associated Booksellers. 270 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by GERALD REITLINGER

THIS is an important book in spite of its thoroughly unliterary appearance—it is printed throughout on glossy paper in order to accommodate a collection of portrait-photographs. Published in Germany in 1954 under the title *Das Gewissen Steht Auf*, the book's considerable success led to its appearance in England, and now to this American edition.

The sixty-four sketches included are pious obituaries rather than objective biographies, yet they contain a good deal of original research, and in the case of some of the more humble figures it must have meant considerable labor to dig up any biographical data. That the book's prevailing tone should be solemn is only natural: the author is the widow of a leading member of the July 1944 conspiracy circle. The facts have nevertheless been checked with true German thoroughness, and there is appended a valuable bibliography of writings concerning the German "Resistance movement."

The work has its faults. The biographies are not arranged alphabetically, but grouped under the quite capricious headings of "Youth," "Learning," "Friendship," "The Stage and the Law," "Tradition," "Christianity," and "Freedom and Order." It is difficult to see any merit in such an arrangement, which is tiresome as well as incomprehensible. Even harder to comprehend is the criterion of selection. It is of course general knowledge that there were many times this number of victims executed for anti-Nazi activities. Frau Leber only seeks, she says in her preface, to "convey in the stories of the life and death of sixty-four people the motives and manner of resistance." But that, it seems to me, is just what the selection does not convey. Half the biographies concern members of the conspiracy circle of 1944, known as the July plotters. The others deal with persons who had no connection with the conspiracy but who suffered martyrdom in the course of the twelve years of Hitler's rule. Their inclusion is intended to show the universality of the German resistance to Hitler. "Resentment and rebellion brought together people of every kind and drove them to action, and in the end their outraged consciences found a common outlet on 20 July 1944." But if one is to believe that the July plot—that ill-conceived conspiracy of despairing generals, staff officers, and politicians *en retraite*—was really the final outlet of all this emotion, then truly universality must have been lacking in the German sentiment of resistance.

ONE should not, however, judge the thirty-two martyred victims who were not involved in the July plot by the unfortunate sentence quoted above. Only a few of them were in fact active resisters. Some were merely victims of their own indiscretion. Seven of them were executed for defeatist talk, among them a boy of seventeen who repeated items of news from British broadcasts. A company commander on the Russian front and a museum curator in Berlin were each killed for a single ill-humored remark that was overheard and reported. These were victims of hideous cruelty and tyranny, but surely they were not resisters. In nine other instances there was not even the opportunity to resist. Either the subjects were murdered during the anarchic days of 1933, or arrested and done to death later on in concentration camps because at the time of Hitler's accession to power they had belonged to proscribed Christian or left-wing organizations—again passive martyrs.

Some were the victims of accident: an actor committed suicide because he could not bear to part from his Jewish wife; a nun in a Dutch convent perished at Auschwitz because she had revealed her Jewish origin. The head of the Berlin fire brigade was murdered in prison for having disclosed too much about the origins of the Reichstag fire. There are, however, pointers in this book to two actual conspiracies, apart from the July plot: the "White Rose" conspiracy of the Munich University students and the Communist "Rote Kapelle."

The "White Rose" appears in Frau Leber's biographies of Professor Kurt Huber and his twenty-one-year-old pupil Sophie Scholl, an

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enchanting girl whose portrait reveals an almost childlike beauty which is as touching as the quotations from her letters. But the martyrdom of Sophie Scholl and her brother was not all. Sixteen other people were tried for disseminating the "White Rose" leaflets, which were not so unpolitical as they have been made to appear. This end-the-war movement coincided with the fall of Stalingrad and, while hesitating to identify it with Communism, I would call attention to the dominating role—not mentioned here—of Alexis Schmorell, a Volga German with a Russian mother who had actually been brought up a Soviet subject. While these leaflets circulated, the "Rote Kapelle" trials were still proceeding.

ABOUT the "Rote Kapelle," Frau Leber plays hide and seek. No reader of her book will learn of the existence of this organization which worked in wartime Germany for Moscow and Communism. Yet it functioned on such a scale that, after seventy-five death sentences had been carried out against its members, it could still be a nuisance till the end of the war. Quite casually, Frau Leber mentions that a very gallant woman called Maria Terwiel, who was executed for distributing copies of "subversive" sermons by Cardinal Galen and for helping Jews to escape, made use of the "Captain Schulze-Boysen group." There is not a word to indicate that this group belonged to "Rote Kapelle," not a word about Harro Schulze-Boysen, the grandson of Admiral Tirpitz, a Communist in Berlin high society and probably the most daring of the German plotters. Schulze-Boysen surely deserved a place among these biographies. It can of course be argued that plotters working for an enemy government in wartime ought not to be classed with those who resisted Hitler because they wanted to restore German political liberty or to achieve an honorable peace. No such distinction, however, was observed by von Stauffenberg, the hero of the July plot, nor by Frau Leber's husband, Julius Leber, who owed his arrest and condemnation to a fantastically rash attempt to contact the closely watched "Communist underground" on behalf of Stauffenberg.

Through her exclusion of "Rote Kapelle" from the roll of honor, and through her peculiar selection of cases from among the members of the Stauffenberg conspiracy, the author imposes a certain political conformity on her "consciences in revolt." The Communists are excluded, along with those field marshals, generals, and cabinet ministers who did not repent till 1943 or 1944, while among those included there are at least eighteen former Social Democratic politicians, journalists, and trade union leaders. The records of the People's Court show seventy-six persons condemned to death in connection with the July plot. There were also suicides, executions by court martial, and murders by the SS. Dr. Rudolf Pechel, himself a veteran of the Resistance movement, puts the total as high as one hundred and forty-seven. A selection limited to thirty-two should therefore not exclude the most important and active members of the conspiracy.

Yet while the author's list includes the former chief of staff, Ludwig Beck, who was to be head of the new government on Hitler's death, it excludes Field Marshal von Witzleben, who was to be commander-in-chief. True, Witzleben played a weak part on the day of the *coup d'état*, but the same reasoning should exclude Karl Goerdeler who had already been forced by his indiscreet conduct to go into hiding. It is clearly not because Frau Leber has anything against soldiers that Witzleben is left out, for she includes most of the junior officers in Stauffenberg's immediate entourage, as well as the two most active military plotters, Henning von Tresckow and Hans Oster. But what of the generals—Olbricht, Hoeppner, Stuelpnagel, Fellgiebel, Stieff, and von Hase, all of whom fulfilled their pledges to Stauffenberg, conducted the *coup d'état* for him—such as it was—after their fashion, and were duly strangled on a hook at Ploetzensee? And what of the other commanders who, though nemesis overtook the plotters too soon for their support, had at least compromised themselves irrevocably and were forced to take their own lives? Such were the Field Marshals Rommel and von Kluge, and the Generals Wagner, Lindemann, and von Roenne.

FRAU LEBER'S selection from among the civilian plotters is even more curious. Where, one asks, are Johannes Popitz, Albrecht Haushofer, Karl Langbehn, Werner von der Schulenburg, Jens Jessen, Ulrich von Hassell, Karl Sack, and Admiral Canaris, even if the mass-murderers Artur Nebe and Count Helldorf are rightly excluded? Here are eight names which recur constantly in all Resistance literature. It may be that they are excluded from the roll of

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honor because, temporarily or continuously, they held office under Hitler. It may be that some pitch stuck to them, in several cases a lot. Haushofer had been involved with Hess, Popitz with Goering, Langbehn with Himmler, and Jessen with the mass-murderer Otto Ohlendorf.

In their place we are given the biographies of half a dozen former Social Democrats, whose only connection with the July plot was the misfortune that their names were found on Goerdeler's "shadow cabinet" lists or that the plot was simply a pretext to round them up. Yet Frau Leber's list includes Fritz von der Schulenburg who joined the Gestapo in 1937, serving under Himmler who had murdered his former hero, Gregor Strasser. Schulenburg worked for three years in the office of the Berlin Police Presidium as deputy to Count Helldorf, who organized the pogrom of November 1938; but Schulenburg in 1944 had bridged the gap between Stauffenberg's military plotters and the radicals and Social Democrats who gathered round Helmuth von Moltke. That I take to be the reason why he was selected for this martyrology, in preference to his namesake, the ambassador Werner von der Schulenburg, who had never been a Nazi policeman. Can it be that the ex-ambassadors von der Schulenburg and Ulrich von Hassell, though well and truly strangled, have been left out because they were Conservatives? One wonders whether Sophie Scholl and her fellow leaflet-bearers would have recognized a "common outlet" for their consciences in the plans and ambitions of the ex-police chief, Fritz von der Schulenburg.

It is difficult to follow the pious philippics of the "Resistance school" of German writing, difficult to see in the July plot more than a desperate bid to end the war, made by those who had not had the moral courage to act in 1938, 1939, or 1941. In the overgoverned modern world, the protest of the individual conscience is not expressed in political leadership. The spirit of revolt produces Hitlers rather than Garibaldis or William Tells. Rather is that protest to be found in the smaller cranky sects, like the Bible Christians or Jehovah's Witnesses, who suffered so steadfastly under the Nazi regime. Religion is essential to this form of protest. Thus the only subject of these sixty-four biographies who deliberately sought lonely martyrdom was a Catholic priest.

One may learn from this record how in 1941 Father Bernhard Lichtenberg, Dean of St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin, prayed for the deported Jews of Germany and was arrested when on the point of preaching a sermon in which he asked to share their tribulations. One may read his open challenge to the "Reich Health Leader," Dr. Conti, whom he confronted with the facts of the so-called "mercy killing" of the insane. Coolly and deliberately he sent a copy to Hitler's chancellery and to the Gestapo. Two years later he was released from prison, but the Gestapo waited for him at the gates to take him to Dachau. Sixty-eight years old and wasted by illness, he did not survive that road to martyrdom. One need not be surprised that Bernhard Lichtenberg has not been canonized. The Vatican still renders unto Caesar, anxious to guard those precious diplomatic privileges which it has retained throughout two world wars.

French Neo-Liberalism

THE OPIUM OF THE INTELLECTUALS. By RAYMOND ARON. Doubleday. 324 pp. $4.50.

GERMAN SOCIOLOGY. By RAYMOND ARON. Free Press. 135 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

When *L'Opium des Intellectuels* was published in Paris three years ago, it evoked among other comments a characteristic remark by a British historian, Mr. John Bowles, who complained of the French left-wingers pilloried in the book: "It is one of the most depressing aspects of the brilliant French culture that opinions so fundamentally silly should command so much prestige." In his introduction to the English-language edition, more than two years later, M. Aron took occasion to rebut this implied criticism of French intellectual life, observing rather tartly: "After all, the way of thinking symbolized by logical positivism is just as provincial, perhaps more provincial, than that of St. Germain des Prés and the French intelligentsia of the Left." Considering the treatment he has himself received from the Parisian left-wingers, this readiness to defend their intellectual standing against Anglo-Saxon slights shows an agreeable absence of rancor; it also serves as a reminder that for all his devotion to Anglo-Saxon empiricism and liberalism, M. Aron remains firmly lodged on his side of the Channel. Much as he prefers

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Keynes to Marx, his thinking revolves around issues to which American and British writers do not ordinarily give much attention.

To the non-French reader of this volume, in fact, much of its content must remain obscure, unless he happens to be steeped in the traditions of the Left Bank. A good deal of it is taken up by polemics against the editors of *Les Temps Modernes* and *Esprit* for misrepresenting the current state of affairs in the world; while in the more theoretical chapters there occur lengthy passages of disputation on the subject of Hegelian and Marxian doctrine which assume a fair degree of sophistication in the reader. Lastly, there is M. Aron the political commentator who contributes a regular column to *Le Figaro,* the leading conservative daily of Paris. It cannot be said that these various ingredients have been very happily combined—the transition from philosophy to journalism and back occurs a little too frequently and abruptly, and there are moments when it is not clear whether the argument is directed against Hegel or Mme. de Beauvoir. Also it must be said that in spreading himself over so large a polemical surface M. Aron here and there permits his argument to become a little slipshod.

But if *The Opium of the Intellectuals* is not all it is cracked up to be, it has its importance as the most vigorous polemical effort yet made on behalf of that important entity, French neo-liberalism, of the Mendèsian (or post-Keynesian) variety. Like Mendès-France himself, M. Aron is an embattled moderate—both men are Jews, which helps to explain their relative isolation in a country deeply split between Catholic traditionalists and anti-clerical radicals —and an unashamed admirer of Anglo-American empiricism, liberalism, and even capitalism —a dirty word to most Frenchmen, whether of the left or the right. In short he represents what a letter-writer to the London *Economist* once called "the extreme center." It is his misfortune—as it is the greater misfortune of Mendès-France, and of France itself—that west of the Rhine this center is so weak.

Yet not as weak as is sometimes supposed. One of the principal shafts which M. Aron directs against his deluded fellow intellectuals on the extreme left (he has little to say about the moderate Socialists) is a justified reproach for their failure to realize that France is basically a modern country, with problems quite different from those of the backward societies in which Leninism-Stalinism has temporarily triumphed. This judgment is confirmed by everything known about French economic and social development in this century, as well as by the intellectual sterility of French Communism itself. It is, to say the least, significant that among the more prominent fellow-travelers there are plenty of artists, but not a single economist or sociologist of repute. The French revolutionary tradition, combined with economic backwardness in certain areas, provides the Communist party with enough support to keep it going as a mass movement; but it remains a permanent opposition, shut off from the main body of society and increasingly incapable of making contact with other elements in the national life. And its intellectuals, to judge from their sterile polemics, have not advanced significantly beyond the outdated world view which M. Aron is concerned to dismantle.

While it is fairly easy for a critic of M. Aron's erudition to score against opponents whose understanding of the modern world is fatally handicapped by intellectual parochialism, there remains the question whether he has not made things needlessly difficult for himself by trying to conduct the debate at three or four different levels simultaneously. No one, not even a Frenchman, can be an expert on all the subjects which M. Aron has dragged into his argument, from existentialism to the late Senator McCarthy, and there are moments when one feels that in so obstinately battling that great know-all, M. Sartre, he runs the risk of beginning to resemble him. Also it is by no means as obvious as he supposes that all reasonable men must share his own predilection for neo-liberalism. It is even conceivable that if they did, those numerous people who cannot stomach liberalism might turn their backs on reasonableness.

Discursive and rambling, *The Opium of the Intellectuals* is best regarded as a bulky specimen in the great French tradition of essay-writing. With *German Sociology,* M. Aron's other recent publication, we descend into the philosopher's cave where the ghosts of Toennies, Weber, Simmel, and Oppenheimer sit enchained (but not Marx, whose empty place is taken by some of his erstwhile pupils, notably the late Karl Mannheim).

La Sociologie Allemande Contemporaine first appeared in 1936, at a time when sociology was, to put it mildly, not encouraged in the

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universities of the Third Reich (not even the "universalist" doctrine of Othmar Spann, who fervently hailed Hitler's entry into his native Vienna some years later, and was promptly clapped in jail for having previously supported the Catholic "corporative state" of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg). The present English translation is based on the revised French edition of 1950, while an appendix and the bibliography are taken from the German edition of 1953—*Die Deutsche Soziologie der Gegenwart*. After a lapse of some twenty years, in the course of which the former student of German sociology has himself become a Sorbonne professor of that tantalizing subject, the Germans are thus enabled to read what M. Aron thought of his teachers in Heidelberg in the early 30's.

The encounter was clearly a fruitful one; more fruitful perhaps than the subsequent fertilization of M. Aron's mind by English empiricism and Keynesian economics. There are not too many Frenchmen who move easily among the intricacies of Weberian methodology. Indeed M. Aron may be said to have done for Max Weber what Sartre a little later did for Husserl and Heidegger. Whether these German thinkers can ever be acclimatized in France is another question. The French intellectual tradition is pretty tough, and fairly resistant to Germanic importations (except in the case of Marx, who in some ways was closer to French than to German thinking and even managed to write some important works in French). At any rate, *German Sociology* is a pretty good introduction to a subject which has not lost its relevance with the virtual collapse of sociological thinking in Germany during the Hitler period. At present, it is true, the German universities no longer supply the kind of intellectual excitement which made them poles of attraction for foreign students before 1933; it is arguable that a specifically German sociology no longer exists. All the more reason for studying the record of its great age, culminating in the work of Max Weber and his pupils. M. Aron's brief and lucid essay is sufficiently comprehensive to take in the post-Hitler work of the refugee scholars who came to the New School for Social Research in New York, and if he does not come to grips with the neo-Marxism of the Frankfort *Institut fuer Sozialforschung*, he at least indicates his own preferences with sufficient clarity. A very useful work for the advanced student, and *mirabile dictu*, completely free of jargon.

Algeria

LIEUTENANT IN ALGERIA. By JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER. Knopf. 231 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by HAL LEHRMAN

IN JULY 1956, a thirty-two-year-old French journalist and editor was called up as a reserve officer and ordered to embattled Algeria for six months. Some say Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber was drafted so that the government would have relief from his attacks on its Algerian policy in his weekly, *"L'Express."* However that may be, Parliament was later advised by the Minister for Algeria that the lieutenant had been given considerably more latitude than other junior officers. "He maintained," said Robert Lacoste, "the best relations with his superiors, all the way up, even to the General Commander-in-Chief, and with my closest associates." Conversely, Servan-Schreiber faced the same risks and bruises as his fellow officers, showed competence and courage, and even won some medals. Mission accomplished, and restored to civilian freedom, he promptly fired a salvo of newspaper articles and a book based on his "eyewitness" experiences. Now published in America, it has been widely described as a persuasive indictment of France's failure in Algeria.

Official French hopes for an Algerian solution rest on the policy known as "pacification": stern suppression of terrorism and insurrection, simultaneous with generous conciliation of the Moslem masses. Restoration of peace is to be followed by elections and sweeping progress in self-government. Now Servan-Schreiber contends that the French army, which should have been the major instrument of "pacification," has suppressed without conciliating. Armed brutality toward native Algeria, without distinction between friend and foe, has converted the whole country into an enemy camp and turned "a rebellion into a revolutionary war." The earnest efforts of a few dedicated officials and some honest soldiers have been nullified by lack of guidance from the top, the pervasive "rottenness of the Administration," the malevolent influence of reactionary colonialism, and army traditionalism itself. In sum, the author concludes, there is little to choose between the French army in Algeria and the Gestapo in occupied France.

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A whole generation of French youth conscripted for Algerian duty is being infected by totalitarianism. France may end by losing not only Algeria but her own democracy.

Both the articles and the book attracted wide attention in France at the time of publication there. The effect, insured by the author's impressive credentials and the damaging character of his charges, was heightened by his literary skill. The vivid story simply could not be put down or, once read, ignored. It was rich with memorable episodes: the scene inside a native hut as the lieutenant's friendly commando unit and a group of only half-persuaded villagers bed down gingerly together for the treacherous night; the author's encounter with a paratrooper allegedly assigned by a reactionary French "underground" to liquidate him; the dialogue with two faceless officials in Algiers who intimate archly that if he writes anything unpleasant after being demobilized, someone may disclose "evidence" that he took a cut from the fees of a military brothel in his area. . . . No such "disclosures" followed, but echoes of Servan-Schreiber's charges resounded widely through France, while the subsequent American edition was helped by a heroic publicity photo showing the author handsomely arrayed in battle dress.

How solid is Servan-Schreiber's case? The question involves more than one man's journalistic judgment or integrity. No one has denied that French forces, in their retaliation against the fellaghas (partisans) have indulged in brutal excesses—sometimes against innocent persons. But are these outbreaks systematic and officially endorsed, or are they the aberrations of individuals? If the former, then Servan-Schreiber is right. Sooner or later, a program of blind repression against *all* Moslem Algerians would rally them behind the most extreme faction of the nationalists and destroy the native moderates who are France's sole hope for a sane solution.

Such blundering would jeopardize France's economy, prestige, morale, and political stability. It would affect the West profoundly, if only because France is the heart of NATO. It would engage the whole important southwest Mediterranean shelf: Algeria dwarfs neighboring Morocco and Tunisia, which are relatively pro-Western and cool to pan-Arabism; Algerian extremists are pro-Nasser, potentially "neutral" and ominously impatient even now with the moderates in Tunis and Rabat. Algeria also contains some 135,000 Jews; the more rabid nationalists have already begun to preach boycott against them; a sovereign Algeria led by such extremists would soon be part and parcel of the Arab League.

At first glance, *Lieutenant in Algeria* seems to be an objective, balanced, and accurate report. Its denunciations are not wholly one-sided. It refers to the fellaghas' ruthless reprisals against pro-French Moslems, to their abominable practice of mutilating corpses, to the existence of warring factions inside the nationalist ranks. It notes that any fellagha leader who may seek an ultimate understanding with the French is just as hamstrung as is an enlightened French commander.

But how much of this air of objectivity is genuine? The author's reference to fellagha atrocities is minimal, considering their enormity and their extent. On the other hand, his description of individual fellaghas tends to be genial, almost admiring. Except for the few Frenchmen of whom he approves, he shows no such sporting attitude toward his own compatriots. The general who turns a simple infantry operation against one rebel-held house into an air bombardment of a whole village, the

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sergeant who butchers a carload of unarmed Moslems to prove he is not a "sissy," soldiers who would sooner shoot a "gook" than interrogate him—these are the types whom the author selects as truly representative of French pacification. The officials and settlers he depicts are hardly more edifying.

What sort of eyewitness evidence supports such portraits? The author records conversations which he could not possibly have overheard, among persons who could not possibly have confided in him. Some of the episodes are so apt, so neat in their contours, that one must suspect artistic contrivance. Servan-Schreiber is careful not to say that his book is an exact account. In fact, he states expressly—and letters in the appendix confirm it—that he has made "changes." But for what reason? Merely to prevent the identification of "certain of my comrades-in-arms" who had a right to anonymity? Since this presumably involved only a revision of names, localities, and minor details, the author leaves the impression that his story is otherwise authentic. He was more cautious in the French edition, which declared, after explaining his desire to protect his friends: *"Ce récit comporte donc les transpositions nécessaires, et ne doit pas être considéré comme un document."* The latter half of this sentence—that the narrative "should not be taken to be a document," is significantly omitted from the English version. One can perhaps overlook journalistic contrivance if the product is at least true in its major aspects. This requires, however, that *all* of the *essential* facts be reported. But too much has been omitted from *Lieutenant in Algeria.*

Take Servan-Schreiber's allegation that army excesses are not only condoned but officially encouraged. To investigate such charges, the government appointed a commission of distinguished jurists and others of unimpeachable disinterestedness. Their report, recently published, confirmed that outrages had been committed, but it also found that these were not officially inspired; that they were sporadic and individual, not systematic; and that the authorities had taken action against them.

A major point in Servan-Schreiber's indictment is the army's alleged failure to establish and spread friendly contact with the Moslem masses. He asserts that the "Black Commandos"—volunteer units which undertook to remedy this by hazardous missions of conciliation into angry native territory—were unique, an innovation by his own commanders in the field, not by the higher authorities, and were deliberately frustrated by other commanders and even by the supreme command. In consequence, according to the author, the entire population is turning in revulsion away from France toward the fellaghas. This hardly corresponds to the situation as this reviewer was able to observe it in Algeria himself some nine months before Servan-Schreiber arrived. True, I was not a member of the French armed forces at daily grips with the fellaghas, and I only stayed six weeks, not six months. But I traveled widely as far southwest as the Saharan frontier with Morocco, as far northeast as Philippeville. In the Aurès Mountains, cradle of the revolt, I watched French troops fighting the guerrillas —and fraternizing with the population. Special French "Native Affairs" units, long before Servan-Schreiber's "Black Commandos" were invented, were building schools, distributing seed and medicines, and even recruiting Moslems into *volunteer* militia against the fellaghas.

Today such units are serving widely in the once rebel-terrorized regions as teachers, engineers, architects, judges, doctors, and in other welfare posts. What effect has this had on the population? On pain of death, the fellaghas have long proclaimed an absolute ban against Moslem use of any French services, or patronage of any French or French-supported institutions. Yet in a recent twelve-month period, the number of Moslem children in elementary schools rose from 189,000 to 326,000, the number of Moslem patients in free clinics from 150,000 to over 600,000. Over 35,000 Moslems last year joined the native police auxiliaries and the volunteer militia—vastly more than the fellaghas have recruited *in toto,* even according to their own maximum claims. Perhaps the most spectacular success of all has been scored in Arab reception of a new local self-rule program: last November, 2,950 Moslem councilmen were serving alongside 540 Europeans in newly formed communes, despite fellagha threats of assassination which were occasionally made good.

SERVAN-SCHREIBER'S book, if only because of its concentrated episodic style, creates the impression that the rebels are an organized army waging daily battles and capable of formidable operations. This was hardly true when he wrote, and it is considerably less true today. Even when his first articles appeared there

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were clear signs that the fellaghas were beginning to slow down. By the end of 1957, though it was still far from certain that France would ultimately achieve a satisfactory solution for herself in Algeria, the uprising seemed feebler than at any time since its outbreak. The fellagha "high command" was shaken by defections, with rival "armies" butchering one another. The "battle of Algiers"—a city which the rebels had once promised to engulf in terror—had been won by the French, at least for the moment. The capital was tranquil again—thanks mainly to Casbah inhabitants who had led French raiding parties to rebel lairs. In the countryside, fellagha bands were operating sporadically through occasional hit-and-run attacks. Even the graph of assassination had plunged downward.

Finally, it should be noted that Servan-Schreiber was not new to Algerian affairs when he arrived as a lieutenant. He was the editor of a weekly which had long been manifesting an unflinching tenderness for North African independence movements. It is also relevant that the author is a collaborator and disciple of Mendès-France. In short, he went to Algeria with a ready-made thesis—and with facilities available to help him prove it.

Algeria may yet turn out to be one of the tragedies of our era. At this uncertain juncture it would be rash to predict how the drama will end. It is too early to say that Paris has entirely shaken off the influence of "imperialist" mentality. The much advertised *"loi-cadre,"* which schedules progressive stages of autonomy within the integral frame of France, has yet to win clear acceptance from Moslem and European in Algeria. Pacification has still to demonstrate that a sovereign status can somehow be retained for France in a predominantly Moslem community, which is groping slowly but massively for a sovereignty of its own. Nor can France in good conscience simply cut herself off from Algeria: there are a million Frenchmen involved—and a Moslem people of nine millions whose ancient foundations of society, for better or worse, have been washed away and who may not be equipped to survive a total French departure. (The peaceful exodus of the Dutch does not seem to have been entirely a boon to Indonesia.) Servan-Schreiber's book offers no substitute for pacification. It does not construct or propose. It condemns. No service is thereby rendered to France, the West, or even Algeria.

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Moslems and Arabs

ISLAM IN MODERN HISTORY. By WILFRED CANTWELL SMITH. Princeton University Press. 308 pp. $6.00.
ISLAM INFLAMED. By JAMES MORRIS. Pantheon. 326 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by JOEL CARMICHAEL

ONE of the main difficulties in assessing phenomena in the Islamic world derives from the circumstance that the Arabic language, indispensable for an understanding of the intellectual background of Moslem and more particularly Arab affairs, is extraordinarily difficult to learn. This simple fact makes specialists irreplaceable, and from the point of view of cultivated Westerners imposes a choice between the erudite approach and the casual effusions of journalists purveying "local color."

Now most of us know the shortcomings of specialists. A lifelong study of Arabic, or of Islamic theology, does not necessarily imply qualities of insight, or for that matter anything beyond the fact, in itself sufficiently impressive, of having accumulated enough Arabic to be able to cope with texts. There are some notable exceptions, but the fact that the attainment of expertise is so cumbersome lays the scholar open to the charge of pedantry. This deficiency becomes more disquieting as the interplay of interests becomes more intense. We are progressively exposed to the disguised special plead-

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ing of propagandists, as well as to the lucubrations of the specialists. This is regrettable since, after all, Islam encompasses a substantial segment of humanity, covering as it does a third of Africa and a vast area of Asia. An awareness of basic similarities between Islam and Christendom, long overlaid by the historic European self-preoccupation, is now gradually reaching the wider public, and a growing stream of material has been pouring off the presses since the end of the last war. Two recent books dealing with this subject are excellent examples of different approaches: the scholarly and the reportorial, in this case with literary overtones.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, professor of Comparative Religion and director of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, has undertaken a comprehensive survey of a number of Moslem civilizations (Arab, Turk, Pakistani) plus a general essay on the development of Islam in the modern world. On the whole he strikes a successful balance between professional scholarship and writing for the general public, but he lacks the penetration one has a right to expect from a leading scholar.

Professor Smith, like so many Anglo-Saxon enthusiasts before him, is deeply involved not only in the "Arab" past, but in present-day Arab propaganda, without, unfortunately, appearing to realize it. What is one to make, for instance, of a long section dealing with the Arabs in history which begins with "The Arabs are a proud and sensitive people"? This tone recurs in one form or another throughout the book, and where it does it blurs the perspective precisely when some crucial question of history or politics comes up for discussion, e.g., by lumping together "Arabs" and "Moslems" when it is necessary to keep them disentangled. Again, while paying lip service to the notion that Islam—like Christianity—is in principle indifferent to nationalism in its modern form, Professor Smith occasionally indulges in remarks such as "Nationalism, for Moslems, is everywhere a Moslem nationalism." To the extent that there are nationalist movements in Moslem countries this is clearly not only true but trivial. But by stating it in this oversimplified form, Professor Smith manages to by-pass the deeper antithesis between the two movements (considered in terms of their spiritual implications) which has led to so much misunderstanding in Moslem and especially in Arabic-speaking countries.

The author's infatuation with the rhetoric favored by propagandists leads him not only to refer continually to the "Arabs" as a people, even for periods when the meaning of "Arab" was profoundly different from later ages, but causes him to indulge in statements such as "the Arabs once produced one of the world's great cultures." Yet the whole point about the Arab past is that, whatever the impetus given by the Bedouin irruption from Arabia, Islamic civilization itself, with the exception of the language and the basic elements of religion (itself manifestly a borrowing from Judaism and Christianity), was the creation of those nationalities who were *conquered* by the Arabs, while remaining on a higher plane culturally and administratively: the Byzantines, Persians, Greeks, Jews, Arameans, etc., etc.

The author tends to employ the terms "Arab" and "Moslem" almost interchangeably: thus he refers to the initial failure of the Arabs to conquer Constantinople, which later, however, falls—in 1453—to the "second great wave of Islamic expansion." The reader's mind at this point is compelled to leap from one stage to the next: the "second great wave" which took Constantinople was, after all, that of the Turks, the people who oppressed the Arabs longer than any other and evoked a hatred among them which brought Arab nationalism into being at the end of the 19th century! More generally, the author's constant references to Arab pride in the past appear strange, since one of the most striking things about this recovery of the ancient Islamic (not merely Arab) past is that it is largely due to the efforts of scholarly minds in Europe during the past three generations, who all wrote in German, French, or English. In fact there is no knowledge of any serious kind at all among contemporary Moslems about their past which is not due to these Western scholars. Folklore, legends, fables, etc., etc., survive indeed among the masses, coupled on another level with the traditional pietistic view of theologically trained Moslem scholars; but it is precisely since the spread of nationalism in the Moslem world that the concomitant extravagances of rhetoric about the glorious past have come to depend on the work done by European scholarship.

Professor Smith's susceptibility to propagandist rhetoric has also led him to underrate the part played by non-Moslems in the genesis of Arab nationalism. It is common knowledge that the very first impulses toward a modern "nationalist" conception of Arabic-speaking peo-

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ple took root in the Christian communities of Syria (including Lebanon) during the last third of the 19th century. This nationalist ferment passed into Syria chiefly via the foreign missions stationed there. To the Arabic-speaking Christians in their quest for a way out of their ghetto, glorification of the Arabic language, which they shared with their Moslem neighbors, was as natural as common aversion to the Turks. This circumstance may be displeasing to Moslems today, but for a scholar to disregard it seems puzzling. One also notes Professor Smith's curious identification of Egypt with Arabism, notwithstanding the extreme novelty of this phenomenon.

These weaknesses are the more striking in view of such introductory remarks as "We shall see in the Arab a case of how terribly significant is this use of the mind not to solve problems, but to prove that they really do not arise." The author is fully conscious of the profound importance to contemporary Islam of apologetics rather than analysis, and yet he falls prey to the prevailing tendency to concentrate not on the reality of the Arab world, but on the Arab ideologist's myths about that reality. Needless to say, the "Zionist crisis" is an inevitable victim of this method. It seems perfectly reasonable to Professor Smith that Arab leaders representing fifty million of their fellow nationals—or for that matter, in their wilder moments, all 350 million Moslems!—turn hysterical when discussing the presence on one four-hundredth of their territory of one and a half million Jews! Arab hatred of Israel is incontestably a factor in the Middle Eastern imbroglio; the problem is *how much* of a factor it is and what its objective sources are. This question must be studied soberly, and not in terms of the conventional ax-grinding of politicians and journalists.

James Morris's *Islam Inflamed* is a different kettle of fish altogether. Mr. Morris is a youthful British journalist who has made a considerable reputation for himself as a talented writer and observer; he makes no claim beyond this, but it is a great deal, and this book is a good example of his best qualities.

The book is actually a long essay on Egypt, with a tailpiece on the Sudan, followed by a casual sprinkling of notes and sketches on the remainder of the "Islamic world," mostly odd points around Syria and the Persian Gulf. This travelogue is amplified by random observations on French, Russian, British, etc., policies, the whole united by little beyond an agreeable style. The title is thus a misnomer, but in justice to Mr. Morris it should be noted that the British edition bore a different designation. Its present form must be due to an understandable desire to cash in on the post-Sinai situation without annoying anyone by mentioning Israel, at any rate in the body of the book. Actually, a compromise has been found by providing the book with a bogus "live" framework, in the guise of a somewhat improbable conversation Mr. Morris is supposed to have had with an Israeli colonel in the Sinai Peninsula, in November 1956. Otherwise, ex-

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cept for a few banal references to Arab hatred of the Israelis, Israel is omitted altogether from a book subtitled by the publisher "A Middle East Picture." Thus, only the Egyptian section of the work can be taken seriously.

With these qualifications it can be said that Mr. Morris's observations are unusually well written, accustomed as we are to the same general sort of material being displayed in the implacable stereotypes of American journalism. His style has momentum, color, and elegance, and the Egyptian third of the book is exceedingly readable. In addition he has managed to do something which scarcely any journalist has ever done in Egypt: he has actually poked his nose into the sights, sounds, and smells beneath the surface, and something of the pervasive reek comes through.

But only on that level. Colorful reportage, however readable, does not convey insight, and Mr. Morris, unprepared for his trip to the Middle East by anything but a general education and his native acumen, continually stumbles over matters which require more than elementary knowledge. Thus he comments on the Bedouins having "advanced further along the road to Arab unity than anyone else," a remark whose naivety is really quite breathtaking. The cleavage between the Desert and the Sown is perhaps the most deeply rooted division in the Middle East, and failure even to perceive its existence hardly reassures us as to the author's grasp of the phenomena he describes so smoothly.

On the more contemporary and purely political plane, he swallows the usual nonsense distributed by the Egyptian regime to the innocent. One of the chief problems of Egypt is the increasing pressure to which all minorities have been subjected during the recent nationalist fervor; this does not, to be sure, have much to do with the theoretical claims of Islam to racial tolerance (which are justified—*within* Islam) but it is nevertheless a fact of moment to the minorities who are feeling the squeeze. This includes the most ancient minority of all, the Copts, whose history is as old as Egypt itself and who constitute over one-tenth of the population. Mr. Morris dismisses this human and political problem with an airy wave of the hand, after speaking sardonically enough of the polemical zeal of government propagandists; but his cynicism by-passes the point.

In the ordinary way such a book would simply be taken for the light reading it is. One of the characteristics of its style, however, is an urbane authoritativeness, and against this the unwary reader should be warned.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

GORDON A. CRAIG is professor of history at Princeton and the author of *Makers of Modern Strategy* and *The Politics of the Prussian Army*.

GERALD REITLINGER's two books, *The Final Solution* and *The SS: Alibi of a Nation* have established him as perhaps the leading authority on terrorism under the Hitler regime.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM is an associate editor of COMMENTARY.

HAL LEHRMAN's reports on Middle Eastern affairs have been a regular feature of this magazine.

JOEL CARMICHAEL contributed "Islam and Arab Nationalism" to our July 1957 number.

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